

ARENA

EDITORS JOHN DAVENPORT JACK
LINDSAY AND RANDALL SWINGLER

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This fourth number brings to an end Volume I of ARENA, which will be available shortly in book form at 10s. 6d. With the inception of Volume II, ARENA will appear bi-monthly, beginning on July 1st, 64 pages at 1. 6d. Subscription rates will remain the same, 10s. per annum post free, from 28-29, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.

EDITORIAL NOTE

It is unavoidable that the lonely position we now occupy in the field of serious periodical literature should cause us to reflect.

The purpose and function of a literary magazine is the maintenance, and perpetual explication, of fundamental critical standards. Where there is no critical vitality, there will be no creative vitality. Criticism heightens and extends the appreciation of all literature, thereby intensifying the relation of literature to life. So the quickened response, the demand, is stimulated, which evokes imaginative creation. A magazine which complains of failing powers and fading response, has only itself to blame. It is revealing the relaxation, the confusion, of its critical standards.

Some part of this number of ARENA is devoted to the application of fundamental critical standards to particular subjects. This is the way in which critical method is developed: both the subjects and the basic principles become illuminated. Obvious enough, but it seems necessary to repeat this in view of the utter lack of any consistent critical method in the broad field of British literature to-day. Hence its diminishing vitality.

Two of our articles have an extra appeal, something in the nature of a newspaper "scoop". These vernacular poems of Robert Burns have never been published, nor critically commented on before. And the letter about D. H. Lawrence, by the woman who knew him perhaps more intimately than he ever knew himself in the most crucial formative period of his life, illumines in a few pages more clearly and definitely that life than all the tomes since written about him. Aragon makes the statement of the revolutionary nature of Joy in our world, which is the precise counter-affirmation to the position of late-lamenting *Horizon*. And in the essays on Dickens and Flaubert the basic issues of the Novel in the last century, its positive and its critical functions, are explored.

This will be enough to illustrate our confidence, that the vitality of literature is far from a lost cause, and in the public that we shall continually strive to deserve.

Sydney Goodsir Smith

ROBERT BURNS AND "THE MERRY MUSES OF CALEDONIA"

IN HIS LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS, HANS HECHT* SAYS "Throughout his life, Burns placed his poetic skill in ever greater measure . . . at the service of that one great national idea to which he clung with passionate fervour, viz. the wish to leave to posterity, in an ideal and permanent form, a complete collection of the songs of Scotland". In this, Burns was in line with the general tendency of the time. The XVIII century was, among other things, an age of folk-song and ballad collections. In England, the vogue was a sign of that growing sentimentalism towards the "picturesque" and "romantic" middle ages which attained its finest expression poetically in *The Ancient Mariner*, and therefrom, descending through *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and *The Lady of Shalott*, contributed to the general weakening and softening of the English poetic genius. In Scotland, the cotemporaneous interest in folk-song had a quite other *raison d'être*: it was a symptom of the desire (in many cases probably subconscious but in some perfectly aware) to shore up a national heritage that was rapidly being disintegrated by the increasing anglicization of the country, politically, culturally and socially, following the Parliamentary Union of 1707. This tendency had begun with the Union of the Crowns a century earlier and the consequent removal of the cultural centre, the court, to London. The Parliamentary Union intensified these trends together with the natural protective reaction to them, and spread the effects of both through, first, the middle classes and, by the turn of the century,

* (1936). All the best Lives of Burns are by foreigners; Hecht (Ger.), Angellier (Fr.), Snyder (Amer.) and De Lancey Ferguson (Amer.). Hilton Brown's recent effort should not be read without the corrective of one of these.

to the labouring classes as well. The political unrest stimulated by the French Revolution and fostered by the huge circulation of Paine's *Rights of Man*, which, though officially banned, was openly hawked in the cities and even penetrated in a Gaelic translation into the Highlands, demanded not only parliamentary reform (as was the case in England) but also separation and repeal of the Union. Thomas Muir, the leader of the organized agitation*, who in 1793 was sentenced to fourteen years transportation to Botany Bay, was in this regard the Scots equivalent of Wolfe Tone in Ireland. Muir's was largely a middle class revolt, but by 1819-20 a working class movement had grown up (calling themselves Radicals to distinguish them from the Whigs), which combined Radicalism with Nationalism.† During the Radical Rising of the textile workers in Lanark at this time, street musicians were being arrested for playing "Scots Wha Hae"; one of the revolutionary papers was called *The Scottish Patriot*; and the Men of Strathaven on "their wild mad night-march to the Cathkin Braes" carried a banner inscribed "Scotland Free or a Desert!"‡ This was the political aspect of the (in part) nationalistic emotions bred by the anglicizing Union of a hundred years before. Without the Union there would still have been labour riots but they would not have had the patriotic scintilla I have described. There is plenty of evidence in Burns's works of the equivalent literary combination of democracy and nationalism. The whole revival of Scots literature in the XVIII century, of which Burns is the culmination, had its *fons et origo* in resistance to English cultural pressure.

As usual, the poets acted as Pathfinders for the politicians. Allan Ramsay's reprinting of the XV century *Christis Kirk on the Green* (in 1715) and Dunbar, Henryson and other Auld Makars (in *Ever Green*, 1724), like the publisher Thomas Ruddiman's splendid folio of Gawin Douglas's *Aeneid* (1710), were, in this connotation, political acts; as was Ramsay's own turning to Scots for a literary

* United Scotsmen and The Friends of the People.

† They were the predecessors of Keir Hardie, Cunninghame Graham and Scottish Labour, and since then of John Maclean and the Scottish Workers' Republican Party, and the "Tito-ism" of many Scottish Communists to-day—though not, of course, within the C.P.G.B.

‡ Tom Johnston : *History of the Working Classes in Scotland* (1920).

medium after a lapse, apart from folk-song and ballad, of a full century. The political orientation of Ramsay (1686-1758), as of Fergusson after him (1750-1774), was Jacobite, as one might expect from their dates. Ramsay's *Ever Green* and *Tea Table Miscellany* (also '24) were anthologies, the former of old Scots poets (the Auld Makars) and the latter a mixer-maxter of old and new, Scots and English—a cunning editorial move, as was the innocuous and to-day oddly-sounding title. They had a tremendous success, but their interest to us today is limited, as the texts were miserably mangled and bowdlerized to suit his polite audience.

II

The most famous of these XVIII century Collections is, of course, Percy's *Reliques* (1765), but the fashion had started right at the beginning of the century with, in Scotland, Watson's *Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems* (1706-11), and, in England, Tom d'Urfey's *Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1719). There were literally scores of such anthologies already in existence, some with music, some without, good, bad and indifferent, when Burns entered the field in 1787.

He had newly arrived in Edinburgh to arrange for a second edition of his *Poems* (Wilson, the Kilmarnock publisher, thought he had exhausted his success with the six hundred copies printed), and at a meeting of the Crochallan Fencibles, one of the many drinking clubs of the time, he met James Johnson, an engraver and music seller, who was in process of producing the first volume of his *Scots Musical Museum*. Burns describes the venture in a letter to his friend Candlish in Glasgow:

"At present I am fit for nothing. Dissipation and business engross every moment. I am engaged in assisting an honest Scotch Enthusiast, a friend of mine, who is an Engraver, and has taken it into his head to publish a collection of all our songs set to music . . . This, you will easily guess, is an undertaking (exactly) [*deleted*] to my taste".*

And to James Hoy, the Duke of Gordon's Librarian:

". . . and your humble servt, to the utmost of his small power,

* De Lancey Ferguson. *Letters of R.B.*, I, 179.

assist(s) in collecting the old poetry, or sometimes to a fine air to make a stanza, when it has no words.”*

In point of fact, after the first volume had come out, Burns became to all intents and purposes the editor-in-chief. Poor Johnson was an Enthusiast alright, but he was also, unfortunately, practically illiterate. Some of his sentences in letters quite baffle comprehension, even as to their general drift. However, the collaboration was to bear fruit. To this collection,† and later to George Thomson’s more polite and elegant *Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs for the voice* (5 vols., 1793-1826), Burns contributed over three hundred and fifty songs, as well as prefaces, notes, and, in the case of the *Museum*, most of the editorial work. For none of this would he accept a penny of payment. He regarded the work as a patriotic duty.

“Perhaps you may not find your account, *lucratively*, in this business; but you are a Patriot for the Music of your Country; and I am certain, Posterity will look on themselves as highly indebted to your Publick spirit.—Be not in a hurry; let us go on correctly; and your name shall be immortal”.

RB to Johnson, 13.II.88.‡

“As to any remuneration, you may think my Songs either *above*, or *below* price; for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. . . . In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c. would be downright Sodomy of Soul! . . . A proof of each of the Songs that I compose or amend, I shall receive as a favor”.

RB to Thomson. 16.9.92.§

The songs fall into three categories: (a) Original songs by Burns, written to existing airs. (b) Old fragments, sometimes only the refrain or a mere title surviving, which he completed or refurbished. (c) Old songs “of an indelicate nature” to which he wrote new words. Many of his best known songs, such as *Auld Lang Syne*,

* Ibid. I, 132.

† *The Scots Musical Museum* (6 vols., 1787-1803).

‡ Ferg. I, 275.

§ Ibid. II, 123.

are merely new versions of songs that had been current in different forms for centuries. To this work he devoted the last ten years of his life.

III

It is interesting to note that there are very few *songs* dating from before 1786, the year of the Kilmarnock edition; whereas there are hardly any *poems* of any worth written after that date. Burns's visit to Edinburgh (1786-8) was the watershed of his poetic career. His initial inspiration seems to have been exhausted, by and large, with the publication of his first book. *Tam o' Shanter* and, on a lower level, the *Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson*, both of 1790, are unique exceptions. On this point it must be remembered that some of his finest satires were not deemed suitable for publication in the Kilmarnock volume. They appeared later; but in all cases their dates of composition were before 1787. *Death and Dr. Hornbook*, *Holy Willie's Prayer* and *The Jolly Beggars*, three of his very finest masterpieces, all belong to 1785.

When he arrived in Edinburgh, the lion of the season, he must have realized, if only half-consciously, that he had done as much as he would ever do, at any rate in the satirical vein he had been following. Henderson* puts it in a nutshell:

"Apart from songs—his addiction to which in his later years meant that if he had not been 'made weak by time and fate', he had meanwhile ceased either to 'seek' or 'find' a fuller poetic utterance—his career as poet, which had really extended over little more than a short two years, virtually terminated with the publication of the first Edinburgh Edition in 1787, the only great poem of the last nine years of his life being *Tam o' Shanter*, which he was led to undertake very much by accident".

His stay in Edinburgh, waiting for the publication of his new augmented edition, did nothing to stir any dying poetic fires. He was unhappy about his future, both economic and emotional (or matrimonial). The Edinburgh *literati* dined him and wined him, but did not offer him the sinecure that he was hoping for. He did not enjoy being "a raree show", and although he bore himself well he did not feel at home in "Patrician" company. Also, the habitués of the drawing-rooms, despite their flattery, were

*T. F. Henderson (Co-editor with W. E. Henley of the Centenary Burns, 1896-7, the best edition) in *Scottish Vernacular Literature* (1898).

essentially and indeed actively (though politely) unsympathetic to his genius, trying to persuade him to give up his "barbaric" Scots ("You ought to deal more sparingly, for the future, in the provincial dialect")* and write elegant effusions in English in the manner of Shenstone and Beattie ("You should also . . . become master of the heathen mythology . . . which in itself is charmingly fanciful").* In symbolic terms, it was a struggle between Clarinda "the fair Empress of the Poet's Soul", and Jean Armour "the bonnie Lassie, the Lassie I lo'e best". For instance, Henry Mackenzie, the "Man of Feeling" and literary dictator of the capital, in his generous and commendatory review of the Kilmarnock *Poems* in *The Lounger* (Dec. 7. 86), could not forbear from remarking that "even in Scotland, the provincial dialect . . . is now read with a difficulty which greatly damps the pleasure of the reader; in England it cannot be read at all".† This, of course, was powerful wishful-thinking on Mackenzie's part, first and last; but it was also typical of the prevailing atmosphere in which the poet moved. He was undeceived, however, and commented on this sort of thing to Mrs. Dunlop (22.3.87):‡

"I have the advice of some very judicious friends among the Literati here, but with them I sometimes find it necessary to claim the privilege of thinking for myself."

But even when he escaped from the "Soirees" into his own chosen company, such as that of the Crochallan Fencibles§ in Daunie Douglas's Tavern, the life of the streets, the oyster cellars and the stews failed to console him, even with compensatory material for his Muse. The life of "the old Scots Capital, gay, squalid, drunken, dirty, lettered, venerable"||, which had been his beloved Fergusson's inspiration, spoke nothing to the farmer from Kyle. He was truly the "rustic Bard", as he liked to call himself. These are typical, but by no means constant, extracts from his letters of this time.

* Letter from Dr. John Moore, then in London, 23.5.87. Hecht, *Life of R.B.*

† Ibid.

‡ Ferguson, I, 80.

§ So named in satirical allusion to the Buonaparte Volunteer movement.

|| Henley. *R.B., Life, Genius and Achievement in Poetry of R.B.* (Centenary Edn. 1897).

"I am still undetermined as to the future; and, as usual never think about it".

"I am still 'dark as was Chaos' in respect to Futurity".

"Still I know very well, the novelty of my character has by far the greatest share in the learned and polite notice I have lately got".

"I cannot settle to my mind . . . If I do not fix, I will go for Jamaica. Should I stay in this unsettled state at home, I would only dissipate my little fortune".

"The stateliness of the Patricians in Edinr, and the servility of my plebeian brethren . . . have nearly put me out of conceit altogether with my species".

"A lingering indisposition has hung about me for some time and has beaten me out of the use of pen and ink".

"Here am I—that is all I can tell you of that unaccountable Being—myself. What I am doing no mortal can tell; what I am thinking I myself cannot tell; what I am usually saying is not worth telling. The clock is striking one, two, three, four, -, -, -, -, -, -, twelve forenoon; and here I sit, in the attic storey, alias the garret".

IV

In this discontented and frustrated state of mind he was the more likely to jump at Johnson's suggestion to collaborate in a collection of songs that would be superior to anything of the kind yet published. Burns had been interested in the subject from his youth, and had already written a few sets of words for old tunes. He took up Johnson's idea with enthusiasm ("I have been absolutely crazed about it". 25.10.87), and from this point on, wherever he happened to be, the Borders, the Highlands, doing his rounds as Exciseman in Galloway, he memorised or jotted down scraps and fragments to be worked up later into presentable shape for the *Museum*.

A large number of these, if not most, would be bawdy; such as were bawled out nightly at the convivial meetings of the Crochallan Fencibles. Maybe, along with perservid drinking habits, it is a natural reaction from Calvinism, coupled with that aptitude for the ballad form of utterance that has made the Border ballads the best balladry in literature; but, whatever the reason, it is a fact that the composition of obscene verse in Scotland is of such

a quality and has so extensive a tradition as almost to merit a chapter to itself in the discussion of any given period of Scottish literature—from Dunbar's *Twa Mairrit Wemen and the Wedow* to the *Ball o' Kirriemuir* of to-day. At the end of the Introduction to his *Golden Treasury of Scottish Poetry*, Hugh MacDiarmid regrets that he has been

"unable . . . to give a fair representation to this most essential and exhilarating and important element of our poetic corpus . . . and to omit it is sadly to emasculate and misrepresent the splendid 'gallus' body of Scottish poetry".

I hasten to assure English and other readers that Scotland does not claim a monopoly of the high-kilted Muse, but at the same time I must point out to any putative contenders for the leerie laureateship that I am talking not of mere skulduggery but of works of art. As Henley or Henderson (I suspect the Englishman Henley) says in their Centenary Edition of Burns (1897):

"Clandestine literature somewhat similar in kind [XVI & XVII cent.] exists in England, but the product of what we may call the Scots poetical shebeens is vastly preferable in the matter of melody and genius".

That the historical facts of the case should be so realized and actually mentioned in Victorian England is testimony enough, but to hear the same facts announced from Presbyterian Scotland, in 1851—is almost like the voice of God! Nonetheless, in that year Robert Chambers published his edition of the *Life and Works of Burns*, in the course of which he had occasion to touch upon this very subject:

"With a strange contradiction to the grave and religious character of the Scottish people, they possessed a wonderful quantity of indecorous traditionary verse, not of an inflammatory character, but simply expressive of a profound sense of the ludicrous in connection with the sexual affections. Such things, usually kept from public view, oozed out in merry companies such as Burns loved to frequent".

Apart from the "grave and religious" business, which is obviously soft soap for the readers of *Chambers' Journal* (the same Chambers), his words could not be bettered. I especially like "oozed out in merry company".

The merry companions of the Crochallan Club seem to have been rather specialists in this amiable department of the Muses'

temple, and it was ostensibly for their delight that Burns put together the notebook of eighty-odd "Cloaciniads" which we know to-day as *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*. This notebook has never come to light but there is no doubt that it existed and its contents were often mentioned in the poet's correspondence. On one occasion when "curst necessity" obliged him to ask someone for a loan of £5, an unnamed "miscreant" offered to buy it for £50.* Eventually, it seems to have been borrowed from his widow, Jean Armour, and never returned; and in 1800, or thereabouts, four years after his death, a "mean-looking volume" was published in Dumfries under this title—of which almost legendary first edition only a single complete copy has survived. The title-page runs as follows. It seems incomplete; I take it from McNaught's article in the *Burns Chronicle* of February, 1894.

THE/MERRY/MUSES/OF/CALEDONIA:/A COLLECTION OF/
FAVOURITE SCOTS SONGS/(Ancient and Modern),/SELECTED FOR
THE USE OF THE/CROCHALLAN FENCIBLES./[double rule]/Say,
Puritan, can it be wrong,/To dress plain truth in witty song?/
What honest Nature says, we should do;/What every lady does
. . . or would do./[double rule]/.

Subsequently, throughout the XIX century, the title, *plus* Burns's name, which does not appear anywhere in the original edition, was used for a number of editions† of sometimes quite irrelevant and vagabond collections of bawdry; until in 1911 the Burns Federation sponsored (with acclamation, I imagine) a reprint, for subscribers only, of the original Dumfries edition with a somewhat hypocritical Introduction (styled "A Vindication of Robert Burns") by Duncan McNaught, heavily disguised as "Vindex".‡ The Vindication part is poppycock, but it does contain a useful though whiles inaccurate examination of the whole bibliographical problem. Mr. McNaught (or Vindex), "after years of hunting", went into the matter with commendable zeal, and

* "Christopher North's" story *per* McNaught.

† McNaught lists seven. (Intro. *M.M. of C. Burns Fed.* 1911).

‡ "Heavily disguised" because the Introduction was made up mostly from two signed articles that had already appeared in the *Burns Chronicle*, Nos. III (Feb. 1894) and XX (Jan. 1911).

his edition, for which we are eternally in his debt, is undoubtedly—unless a miracle should happen—the nearest we shall now get to Burns's own manuscript book.

V

The Contents of this sprightly opusculum, eighty-five compositions in all (with a most generous bonus and *bonne-bouche* in the shape of *The Court of Equity*), consist of (a) a large number of old fescennine songs and fragments, some of which are the basis of many of Burns's most famous songs, and (b) a small number of original works by the Bard. The Debatable Land is fiercely fought over. In the second category are seven songs (Vindex says five) that appear complete (and as many again half-complete) in all modern editions of his Collected Works, viz., *The Rantin Dog the Daddy O't*, *Yestreen I had a Pint o' Wine*, *O Wha is at my Bower Door?* (*O Wha is it but Findlay?*), *The Cooper o' Cuddy*, *The Reel o' Stumpie*, and two songs from *The Jolly Beggars*: "I am a Bard of no Regard" and "I once was a Maid, though I cannot tell when".

Apart from these seven, McNaught admits to only seven more as being by Burns himself. Twenty would be nearer the correct figure in the present writer's opinion, eight of them being accessible in expurgated form in the ordinary editions. But the editor's judgment is distorted by his declared aim to "vindicate" Burns, to demonstrate (if you please)

"... that the association of Burns's name, either as author or editor, with the ribald volumes entitled *The Merry Muses*, is not only an unwarranted mendacity, but one of the grossest outrages ever perpetrated on the memory of a man of genius."

Strong words, Sir! But quibbling. All books bearing the title of *The Merry Muses* were posthumous; naturally Burns could not be their editor. Neither is he their author, if author of the whole contents is meant. Also, he may be referring to the "bad" editions that followed the Dumfries or Crochallan original of 1800. Whatever he may mean by his astonishing outburst, his words are certainly misleading, or ill-composed, or both. Anyway, he protests too much. But, unfortunately for his case, his editorial honesty has overcome both his modesty and his hypocrisy. He provides a few short and not always accurate Notes on the songs which effectively dispose of his bewildering disclaimer. As the Americans say, It just don't make sense. He notes, for instance,

of the old song *Andrew and his Cutty Gun*, that Burns himself "describes it as 'the work of a master' ". Also, Burns used it as a model for *Blythe was She*, the chorus of which goes:

*Blythe, blythe and merry was she,
Blythe was she but and ben,
Blythe was she by the banks of Earn,
And blythe in Glenturit glen.*

In the *Merry Muses* he (who else?) has preserved the original set, with this chorus:

*Blythe, blythe, blythe was she,
Blythe was she but and ben,
And weel she loved it in her nieve,
But better when it slippit in.*

Vindex has not chosen a very good pitch. There is more to follow.

To return to our Contents. Excluding the published songs and those one or two by other hands—one of them a minister's!—we find that at least *thirty* (the editor allows fifteen) of the remaining seventy-five pieces of "musty nastiness" (which is just what they are not) were used as models for Burns's "purified" versions contributed to Johnson's *Museum* and Thomson's *Select Airs*. In their published form these retain sometimes as many as three stanzas out of four of the original version, sometimes as little as a single line, generally the refrain. Another *dozen* (the editor admits six) are original ram-stam "Cloaciniads" from the gill-ravaging Bard himself, and almost all the rest are mentioned by name or quotation in his correspondence. So much for the "grossest outrage", "unwarrantable mendacity", and so on. I have not the space to go into details, but here is an instance revealing Vindex's disingenuousness. Burns writes to his friend Robert Maxwell (20.12.89)* enclosing a song which the editorial note in the *Muses* describes, *tout court*, as "An old song. But its context is as follows:

"... I shall betake myself to a subject ever fertile of themes, a Subject, the turtle-feast of the Sons of Satan, and the delicious, secret Sugar-plumb of the Babes of Grace; a Subject, sparkling with all the jewels that wit can find in the mines of Genius, and pregnant with all the stores of Learning, from

* Ferguson. I, 377.

Moses & Confucius to Franklin & Priestly [*sic*—in short, may it please Your Lordship, I intend to write BAUDY! . . .

[Out of his own mouth—]

"I'll tell you a tale of a Wife,
And she was a Whig and a Saunt,
She lived a most sanctified life
But whiles she was fashed wi her c—t.
Poor woman, she gaed to the Priest,
And to him she made her complaint,
There's naething that troubles my breast
Sae sair as the sins of my c—t."

. . . [and the Priest reassures her]

"It's nocht but Beelzebub's art,
And that's the mair sign of a saunt,
He kens that ye're pure at the heart,
So he levels his dart at your c—t."

. . . and so on. And the letter ends:

"You see, Sir, I have fulfilled my promise; I wish you would think of fulfilling yours, and come & see the rest of my collection."

It is not a very good song; I quote it to make a point. We can leave the editor to vindicate himself, now.

VI

Before going any further I must remark that these are *not* poems. Without being *sung*, they are only half-things. They are not to be judged even as verse. Burns naturally realised this elementary distinction better than his collaborators. To Thomson (8.11.92), he writes:*

"If you mean, my dear Sir, that all the Songs of your Collection shall be Poetry of the first merit, I am afraid you will find difficulty in the undertaking more than you are aware of.—There is a peculiar rhythmus in many of our airs, and a necessity of adapting syllables to the emphasis, or what I would call, the *feature notes* of the tune, that cramps the Poet, & lays him under almost insuperable difficulties.—For instance, in the air, My wife's a wanton wee thing, if a few lines, *smooth & pretty*, can be adapted to it, it is all you can expect.—The following I made

* Ferg. II, 129.

extempore to it; & though, on farther study I might give you something more profound, yet it might not suit the light-horse gallop of the air so well as this *random clink*."

Attribution of the debatable verses without documentary proof is certainly difficult. Many of the songs are found, for instance, generally in fragmentary shape, in David Herd.* Burns knew Herd personally. But there are variations between Herd's versions and Burns's, apart from the latter's additions. In some cases it may be that he took down a variant from "an oral source" (as yodelling tipplers are called by philologists) or that he himself made changes while copying from Herd. In others the original version has obviously been tidied up, a literary hand has been at work, and a few lines expanded to twice or thrice the length of the original set. I shall quote one of these in a moment. But we cannot even be sure the differences that seem by their very "roughness" to be the usual local variants found in all folk-song, are not actually Burns's own variations. He was so steeped in folk literature (which is a contradiction in terms, but let it pass) that in imitating it he also imitated this "roughness"—by which I mean (from a literary point of view, which is invalid here) its "bad" or false rhyming or rhythm. On this, see the last letter quoted, or the following note, nine years before, from his *First Commonplace Book* of 1783 (*aet.* 24):

"There is a certain irregularity in the old Scotch Songs, a redundancy of syllables with respect to that exactness of Accent and measure that the English Poetry requires, but which glides on, most melodiously with the respective tunes to which they are set . . .—This particularly is the case with all those airs which end with a hypermetrical syllable.—There is a degree of wild irregularity . . . and yet, very frequently, nothing, not even *like* rhyme, or sameness of jingle at the ends of the lines. This has made me sometimes imagine that perhaps, it might be possible for a Scotch poet, with a nice judicious ear, to set compositions to many of our most favorite [*sic*] airs . . . independent of rhyme altogether."

A prophetic utterance, at the very outset of his poetic career. *Act.* 24 is not particularly youthful for most poets, but Burns, in

* Herd. *Ancient and Modern Scots Songs, Heroic Ballads, etc.*, 1776. Second edn. Also Hans Hecht: *Songs from David Herd's Manuscripts*, 1904.

the nature of his circumstances, was a late starter. At this age Robert Fergusson, who was soon to be his great inspirer, had already written his all, and was on his deathbed in the Edinburgh Bedlam. Burns had as yet written only four poems that in three year's time he would consider good enough for "gude black prent" in the Kilmarnock edition. Five years later, having exhausted the tempestuous short-lived spring of satire that in 1783 had not yet broken surface, he had returned to the ideas sketched in his Commonplace book. Here is the "Scotch poet with the nice judicious ear", after three years of song-writing, up to all the tricks of the trade, master of his instrument and playing with "a certain wild irregularity". The following ballad is indisputably by the Bard, yet it might easily pass for an anonymous product of the folk. (I might mention here that songs occurring in the course of letters to friends, as distinct from *inclosures* to his publishers, are generally his own compositions.) In October, '93 (he had already sent the verses to another friend in '91), he writes* to Robert Cleghorn, a great Fencible and lover of ribaldry and the recipient of many of his Bardship's *facetiae*:

"There is, there must be, some truth in original sin.—My violent propensity to B—dy [*sic*] convinces me of it.—Lack a day! if that species of Composition be the Sin against 'the Haly Ghaist', 'I am the most offending soul alive'.—Mair for taiken, a fine chiel, a hand-wail'd friend and crony o' my ain, gat o'er the lugs in loove wi' a braw, bon[n]ie, fodgel hizzie frae the English side, weel-ken'd i' the brugh of Annan by the name o' Bon[n]ie Mary; & I tauld the tale as follows.—N.B. The chorus is auld —

"COME COWE ME, MINNIE, COME COWE ME—"

*When Mary cam o'er the Border,
When Mary cam o'er the Border,
In troth was approachin the c—t of a burchin,
Her a—e was in sic a disorder.*

Chorus: *Come cowe me, minnie, come cowe me;
Come cowe me, minnie, come cowe me;
The hair o' my a—e is grown into my c—t,
And they canna win in for to mowe me.*

* Fergusson. II, 213. Two lines of song only.

*But wanton Wattie cam west on't,
 But wanton Wattie cam west on't,
 He did it sae tickle, he left nae as meikle
 As a spider wad biggit a nest on't.
 An' was nae Wattie a blinker,
 He m-w'd frae the queen to the tinkler;
 Then sat down in grief like the Macedon chief,
 For want o' mae warlds to conquer.
 But oh, what a jewel was Mary!
 An' what a jewel was Mary,
 Her face it was fine an' her bosom divine,
 An' her c—t it was theekit wi glory.*

“Forgive this wicked scrawl.—Thine, in all the sincerity of a brace of honest Port.—R.B.”

He falls down with the Macedon chief, some might say, but even that reference is not impossible in XVIII century folk song.

His ostensible purpose in refurbishing the old songs was to preserve them by putting them into polite currency. But now and again, coming across a promising fragment, he made two versions, a polite one for James Johnson, and a not so polite one for the Crochallan worthies. *Had I the Wyte?* (blame) occurs as eight lines in David Herd's MS.

*Had I the wyte? had I the wyte?
 Had I the wyte? She bad me,
 And ay she gied me cheese and bread
 To kiss her when she bad me;
 For she was stewart in the house
 And I was footman-laddie,
 And ay she gied me cheese and bread
 To kiss her when she bad me.*

For the Scots Musical Museum Burns expanded the traditional theme of the lady and her servant to four eight-line stanzas, which are well-known. The second of these runs thus:

*Sae craftilie she took me ben,
 And bade me make nae clatter;
 “For our ramgunshoch glum gudeman
 Is out and owre the water:”
 Whae'er shall say I wanted grace,
 When I did kiss and daut her,*

*Let him be planted in my place,
Syne say I was the fautor.*

The *Merry Muses* version, which the editor again labels as "An old song", begins with lines 1, 2, 5 and 6 of the Herd fragment quoted first, and then continues:

*And when I wadna do't again,
A silly cow she ca'd me;
She straik't my bead, and clapt my cheeks,
And lous'd my breeks and bade me.
Could I for shame, could I for shame,
Could I for shame denied her;
Or in the bed was I to blame
She bade me lye beside her:
I pat six inches in her wame,
A quarter wadna fly'd her;
For ay the mair I ca'd it bame,
Her ports they grew the wider.
My tartan plaid when it was dark,
Could I refuse to share it;
She lifted up her holland sark
And bade me fin' the gair o't;
Or how could I amang the gerse
But gie her hilt and hair o't;
She clasped her houghs about my a—e,
And ay she glowr'd for mair o't.*

If that is not the right Burns *élan vital*, it's gey like. It certainly has my vote.

Here, now, is another instance of the goliardic Bard building up on a small fragment, but in this case he forgets about James Johnson and his *Museum* and there is no polite version at all. It is not *indubitably* by Burns, but it is too accomplished for a genuine folk-song—and yet it has all the "irregularity" and energy and humour (which, of course, are Burnsian qualities too) of the typical bothie ballad, plus an indefinable polish-cum-swing that is very much in the Bard's style. Also, it appears in the *Muses* and not in other collections that I am aware of; and, again, Burns in a letter quotes three lines out of the middle of the first stanza, as if they were the beginning of an old song that he was tinkering with. Unfortunately the letter is mutilated. Lastly, I cannot think

of anyone else who could have written it. It bears the fetching title of *Nine Inch will Please a Lady*. The letter is a few lines only.*
"Ellisland, Friday night—

I sit down to write my friend in not the best plight . . .
The carlin clew her wanton tail
Her wanton tail sae ready
I learnt a sang in Annandale . . . [Letter continues]".

Here is the text from the *Merry Muses*:

Come rede me, dame, come tell me, dame,
My dame, come tell me truly,
What length o' graith, when weel ca'd hame
Will ser'e a woman duly?
The carlin clew her wanton tail,
Her wanton tail sae ready;
I learnt a sang in Annandale,
Nine inch will please a lady.

But for a countrie c—t like mine,
In sooth we're nae sae gentle;
We'll tak twa thumb-bread to the nine,
And that's a sonsie p—t—e.
O leeze me on my Charlie lad!
I'll ne'er forget my Charlie;
Twa roarin bandfu' and a daud,
He nidge it in fu' rarely.

But weary fa' the laithern doup,
And may it ne'er ken thrivin';
It's no the length that gars me loup,
But it's the double drivin'.
Come nidge me Tam, come nodge me Tam,
Come nidge me o'er the nyvel;
Come loose and lug your batterin' ram,
And thrash him at my gyvel.

VII

McNaught, in the course of his *Vindication of the maligned poet*, tells us in rhetorical phrase that "from the stock of ribaldry, obscenity and licentiousness, he feasted the world with the fruits

* Ferguson, I, 295. To Alexander Dalziel (?)

of the Hesperides". This is rather *much*, but it is quite astonishing what the Bard could do with a phrase and a tune. The refrain "For aa that and aa that" is a common one in Scottish song. Burns used it more than once, but nowhere more effectively than in the democratic hymn *Is there, for honest poverty?* Everyone knows these felicitous and justly famous lines. To revive your memory I quote the third stanza:

*Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof for a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
His ribband, star, and a' that,
The man of independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.*

And its perhaps rather over-optimistic ending:

*For a' that, and a' that,
It's comin yet, for a' that,
That man to man the world o'er
Shall brothers be for a' that.*

The sentiments may seem platitudinous to us to-day, even utopian; but they were composed in 1795, when the Government's reaction to the agitation for Reform was in full spate. He sent it to Thomson "not for your book, but merely by way of *vive la bagatelle*." It was published posthumously. Only a year before, Thomas Muir had sailed on a prison ship to Botany Bay. The French revolutionary armies were threatening invasion and Burns himself had been officially reprimanded for such seditious activities as proposing the toast of "The last verse of the last chapter of the last Book of Kings!" and on another occasion, "May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause!" When Thomas Muir's campaign was at its height in 1792-3, Robert Graham of Fintry, a local magnate and friend of Burns's, had written to him questioning his political opinions. In reply he got the following ballad. I quote two of the eight stanzas.* It goes to the tune of "The Campbells are Coming".

*When princes & prelates & bet-headed zealots
All Europe hae set in a lowe (lowe, lowe)*

* Printed in Ferguson. II, 250 (6 stanzas).

*The poor man lies down, nor envies a crown,
And contents himself with a mowe.*

Chorus:

*And why shouldna poor folk mowe, mowe, mowe,
And why shouldna poor folk mowe;
The great folk hae siller, & houses & lands,
Poor bodies hae naething but mowe.
When Br-nsw-ck's great Prince cam a cruising to Fr-nce
Republican billies to cowe (cowe, cowe),
Bauld Br-nsw-c's great Prince wad hae shawn better sense
At hame wi his Princess to mowe.*

To get back to *A Man's a Man For A' That*, the original context* of the famous refrain, as preserved in the *Merry Muses*, was naturally not a very serious one—though the sentiments expressed, you will admit, have an equally universal appeal. At the beginning of this section, I quoted the third stanza and the last four lines of the published version; I shall do the same for the unpublished. The difference is very striking, not to say shattering; but it is the same art at work—or play. “Ye see you birkie ca’d a lord”, etc., was transmuted from—

*His hairy b-l-ks side and wide,
Hung like a beggar's wallet;
His p—k stood like a rollin' pin,
She nicker'd when she saw that.
For a' that and a' that,
And twice a mickle's a' that,
The lassie got a skelpit doup,
But wan the day for a' that.
Then she turned up her b—ry c—t,
And she bade Donald claw that;
The devil's dizzen Donald drew
And Donald gied her a' that.*

Some lady!(see Note*). But sometimes in their transposing from the Crochallan Club to the *Musical Museum*, there is not such a great difference of sentiment, though there may be of language.

* B. inclosed this in a letter to Thomson, 4.8.95. “. . . [it] was never in print; it is a much superiour [*sic*] song to mine.—I have been told that it was composed by a lady.” (Ferg. II, 307).

Consider, gentle reader, the moving pathos of *John Anderson, my jo, John*. First, the "purified" version:

*John Anderson my jo, John,
When first we were acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty powe,
John Anderson, my jo.*

But does not any "sensible" Man of Feeling shed a tear also at this?

*John Anderson my friend, John,
When you did first begin,
You had as good a tail-tree
As ony ither man.
But now 'tis waxen auld, John,
And it waggles to and fro;
And it never stands its lane, now,
John Anderson my jo.*

VIII

Of the disputed attributions we can at least say that certain of them are not folk, and are probably by Burns, on internal evidence of style, reference or circumstance. Such an one is *Godly Girzie*, which begins with a typically Burnsian satirico-sentimental scene. Girzie, who is very pious, on her way home at night, meets with "a man of sin". Not a bad word has yet been said.

*The chiel was wight, the chiel was stark,
He wadna wait to chap nor ca'
And she was faint wi' baly wark,
She hadna pith to say him na.*

Then the typically Burnsian, typically Caledonian, sense of the ludicrous takes charge:

*But ay she glower'd up to the moon,
And ay she sighed maist piouslie,
"I trust my heart's in heaven aboon,
Whare'er your sinfu' p—t—e be."*

Even poor Vindex has to admit in this case: "Quite in Burns's style". But he does not say the same for *The Trogger* (pedlar) which has the support of Henley and Henderson in the Centenary

Edition. They do not go so far as to print it, though. Here is part of it:

*As I cam down by Annan side,
Intending for the Border,
Amang the Scroggie banks and braes
Wha met I but a trogger.*

*He laid me down upon my back,
I thought he was but jokin',
Till he was in me to the bilts,
O the deevil tak sic troggin!
Bedown the bents o' Bonshaw braes
We took the partin' yokin';
But I've clawed a sairy c—t sin' syne,
O the deevil tak sic troggin!*

Enclosed with *A Man's a Man* was a pleasant little burlesque of Augustan classicism written for a bet some years before.

"I accepted it, & pledged myself to bring in the verdant fields,—the budding flowers,—the chrystal streams,—the melody of the groves,—& a love-story into the bargain."

It is called *Ode to Spring*. The first stanza is the best:

*When maukin bucks, at early f—s,
In dewy grass are seen, Sir,
And birds, on boughs, take off their m—s,
Amang the leaves sae green, Sir;
Latona's sun looks liquorish on
Dame Nature's grand impêtus,
Till his p—go rise, then westward flies
To r—ger Madame Thetis.**

This is too obviously written to order, the Muse is not in it. It has charm, but it is not the same Burns of *Had I the Wyte* and *Nine Inch*. The fire of the Kilmarnock satires has died down sadly, the pace, the wit, the galloping hilariousness, the dance of the word, are absent. To end, here is an *echt* folk piece that Burns never used for "purification" purposes—surprisingly, for it has just those qualities of dance that he had once possessed in such measure. It is a Reel tune; hum it as you read, and read it quickly, especially the chorus, which always seems to be the best part of a bothie ballad. I have accented it.

* Printed in full in Ferguson II, 283.

*Oür gudewife went o'er to Fife
För to buy a cóal riddle;
Lang or she cam back again,
Támmie gart my táil todle.*

Chorus: *Táil todle, táil todle,
Tammie gart my táil toddle,
But an' ben wi' diddle doddle
Támmie gart my táil todle.
When I'm dead I'm out o' date;
When I'm sick I'm fu' o' trouble;
When I'm weel I stap about,
And Támmie gars my táil todle.*

And, for good measure, here is the set in the *Merry Muses* for one of Burns's favourite tunes, "Cauld Kail in Aberdeen".

*O gie the lass her fairing, lad,
O gie the lass her fairing;
And something else she'll gie to you
That's wallow worth the wearing.
Syne coup her o'er among the creels
When ye hae ta'en your brandy,
The mair you bang, the less she squeals—
So hey for boughmagandie!*

*Then gie the lass her fairing, lad,
O gie the lass her fairing,
And she'll gie you a hairy thing
And of it be not sparing;
Lay her o'er amang the creels
And bar the door wi' baith your heels,
The mair she gets, the less she squeals—
So hey for boughmagandie!*

"Any association of Burns's name, either as author or editor . . . unwarranted mendacity . . . one of the grossest outrages ever perpetrated . . . memory of a man of genius . . ." (Vindex). "I think I once mentioned something of a collection of Scots songs I have for some years been making; I send you a perusal of what I have got together. I could not conveniently spare them above five or six days, and five or six glances of them will probably more than suffice you. A very few of them are my own. . . . There is not another copy of the collection in the

world; and I should be sorry that any unfortunate negligence should deprive me of what has cost me a good deal of pains." (R.B. to John M'Murdo. Dec. '93.)*

"... They may make you laugh a little, which, on the whole, is no bad way of spending one's precious hours and still more precious breath". (To Jas Hoy, 6.11.87)†

Yes, Robert Chambers was right. They are not "inflammatory"; just good hearty belly-laughs. There seems little reason why they should not be published again. One cannot know Burns properly without them.

NOTE.—The text of all letters quoted is from De Lancey Ferguson's edition, Oxford, 1931. The text of the songs is mostly taken from Duncan McNaught's 1911 edn. of the *Merry Muses* published privately by the Burns Federation. The exceptions are where the songs are also printed in Ferguson's *Letters of R.B.* which have been collated with the original MSS. In these few latter cases comparison reveals that considerable corruption (generally towards anglicization) has taken place—either in the original Dumfries edn. or in McNaught's reprint.

S.G.S.

* Ferg. II, 222.

† Ibid I, 136.

Louis Aragon

HAPPINESS IS A NEW IDEA

MERIMEE WROTE OF STENDHAL: *He is very French in his views on painting even though he asserts that his judgments are Italian. He appreciates the Masters with French ideas, that is, from the literary point of view . . . Beyle lends dramatic passion to a Raphael Virgin. I have always suspected that he loved the great painters of the Lombard and Florentine schools because their works made him think of many things which the masters themselves probably never thought about at all. It is right and proper for a Frenchman to*

judge everything through the spirit. It must be added that there is no language which can express all the subtlety of form and the variations of colour-effects. For want of the power to express all that is possible, one describes other sensations which can be understood by everyone.

I must be very French in this. I have written a great deal about Matisse without ever claiming to have uttered through my words the form or the colour of his pictures: and I am conscious of having imparted dramatic urgency to his chairs, his flower-pieces, to the utensils of his still-lives or his figures. I have the same horror of artistic critical jargon that Stendhal must have had, and I would like to be able to say things about the painting of Matisse that everyone could understand. Words express feelings, but do not copy pictures: therein lie two different languages, and it is a great mistake of modern times to confuse the languages, to talk in dance-terms to explain poetry, to use terms of music to describe painting, and so on. However, today it is the settled habit of critics, and they try to express what the eye sees by words of touch, what the ear takes in by words of smell. And Baudelaire has a strong back and can carry the burden of responsibility for these "correspondences" which are not valid for transfer from the Bus Symphony to the Metro of Light.

In France, for a young man in all periods, painting has been not only a pleasure of the eyes, but also the background for his most secret thoughts. I am absolutely certain that the violence of Géricault wasn't unknown to the dreams of a Rastignac, nor was Delacroix's *Liberty on the Barricades* absent from the vision of a Lucien Leuwen. Isn't Manet the canvas of Baudelaire? Can Cézanne be separated from the young Zola?

When I was twenty or thereabouts, it is a fact that my madness had chosen for its palace a certain light which is Matisse, a world where, if ivy is growing, it is because Matisse has set it there, where women move with a kind of slow grace in order not to disturb the discipline which belongs to beauty according to Matisse, a universe of relations which can only be expressed in terms of the Matissean algebra. It is also a fact that a wild feeling in my youth restrained me from declaring openly this chosen setting, this climate, this second nature of mine. Matisse was my secret, a secret I kept for a long time. My confidential scale of values. And if I were obliged to make a public admission of it at any time, it was always with the precaution of not letting out its

importance and so in 1919 I invented a woman whom I called *Matisse*, like a Christian name, in whom I seemed more than anything anxious to compress a kind of image of the *modernity* of those times, the taste and oddities suitable for my generation. It was the time of the immediate *after-war*, Dada had not yet reached Paris, those young Americans called the Exiles were my comrades, and this *Matisse* born in my imagination had the provocative features of our age and our discoveries, luxurious inventions which we didn't possess, the insolent rejections of the beauty of our elders. I do not believe I have ever written anything in my life—and re-written it in 1923—with such care as I put into this sort of story entitled *Madame rises in her turn* or *Matisse is a redhead who was born in the Batignolles*. Whoever tries to see in it, despite the shadow of *Matissean* painting over the whole story, an actual description of his painting, in the sense in which *Merimée* reproached *Stendhal* for not talking about *Raphael*, will be badly mistaken. Nevertheless, when I come to think of it, what a magical charm this imagined portrait presupposes: *Her arms, the longest in the world, lead into her left hands, which you would think were made for holding up a pensive head. The breast, low and caught at the top with a thin fringe, would easily justify the epithet: with no care for the rules of anatomy, her eyes bite at it, devour it. Hating the thought that they might become a target, she likes to make you believe their immensity comes from make-up, she lengthens the slit of her eyelids with a black line, stretches the arc of her brows right to the roots of her hair. And it's in order to excuse them from devouring her cheeks, I swear to you, that she underlines her eyes with soft shadow . . . The bedroom is only for resting: daylight penetrates through venetian blinds, replacing the unrelenting shutters that have been removed. Zebra of light and shade: nothing permits the imagination to be disorderly, in the sense of letting itself go, in spite of the equivocal night of luminous interferences, for fear that the least excitement might banish the sleep whose palace is here. There is nothing so intimate, so secret as this place . . . but to make the silence more tangible, near the window and catching the light, lies a voiceless violin in a mahogany coffin lined with blue velvet, and the bow which shares its bed is the link which binds this lifeless universe to the real world . . .*

Without a doubt, it was *Matisse*, and it wasn't *Matisse*. The text appeared I believe for the first time in English in the *Exiles* review, *Broom*, then published in Berlin. Then the *Exiles* went back to America and the great world took upon itself to break the

silence of the imaginary room, and I had to find a link with the real world very different from the bow in blue velvet.

Young people have only dreams; old men, only memories. Between these two extremes stands the man moving from irrationality to reason. The man whom the years weigh down with knowledge of the weight of things, the exact breadth of his gestures, the limits of his body and of his love. Julien Sorel mounts the scaffold without getting there; but it's different with Henri Beyle, who is after all Julien continued in his correspondence with the years, as we see him enriched with a fuller love for the intelligible world.

Nowhere as in *Lamiel*, his last novel, which death did not allow him to finish, the real world, not the photographed world, but the human world, full of scents and songs, with its sensitive confusion and yet its definite pattern—nowhere else is the real world to be found in Stendhal as it is in *Lamiel*, in which I cannot help seeing the *Monsieur Verdoux* of 1840—a matter I'll take up elsewhere.

I simply want to say this: if, in Rastignac or Julien Sorel, the Sun of Géricault's horsemen, those young men with thick blood who survive the napoleonic escapade, glows out like a beam of the young ambition of the heroes of that time, then for Balzac and Stendhal in their maturity the horse is as good as the horseman, the drama of the painting is not the same, and they are doubtless nearer the painter than ever Julien Sorel or Rastignac were. For painting is knowledge of the world, only achieved by prolonged human experience. At one and the same time dream and memory. Like an acquired skill in making love, which a young lover's bursts of passion can only fugitively impose.

It was at a tense moment of our common history, in 1941, in the double night of the defeat and of Nice, where nothing is ever completely bitter, because the sky makes it impossible. I rediscovered what had been the mental canvas of my twenty-year-old self, and found it a special remedy for the sorrow of France. I was over forty, with eyes changed by all the deep waters of a lifetime. It was then that I lent the *dramatic passions* of our life to the paintings of Matisse. May Matisse and Merimée forgive me. . . It just seemed to me that the time had come for us to grow conscious of the national reality of Matisse, and to set ourselves the task of loving him, not for his strangeness as we did in my youth, but for his expression of France, for being France itself.

I don't know how I would estimate Matisse if, to give Merimée pleasure, I judged him from the angle of *Italy*, nor whether it is really the way of the French always to *judge through the spirit*. It seems to me that however much he owes to foreign sources, to Hokusai, archaic Greek, Moorish art, this painter has interpreted these sources in *French* terms. And without a doubt through his *spirit*, even though we must get clear what we mean by that, and because each one according to your system is different, is different in spirit. But anyhow the art of Matisse is precisely himself added to what he sees. I want that to be considered a judgment through the spirit, but will anyone forbid me, in connection with the painter, to take over his personal method? and force me to return to an Italian set-up?

For instance, I want to talk about one of Matisse's latest paintings, I have just seen it at Vence in the painter's home, he painted it this autumn. To discuss it *à l'Italienne*, I would only have to say that it is a green slash rending open a red background over which black lines inform you that the French-windows of the Vence house open on to the garden. But can that possibly be enough for my French head, which judges it *through the spirit*? First, when did you decide that French windows could be a rending, unless in the home of some poet given to padding-out, who had gilding at the end of his verse, or time in its duration? And from what date has the shade in a house been of such a brilliant red compared with the garden air? You must have *the eyes of your spirit* almost burned out with sunshine, so that the leafage makes the shadow scarlet, and yet none of all this explains the black strokes like some new kind of writing, independent of the colour by which the essential objects of the room are summed up, through which a hint suffices for so many things and for relationships between things, till I recognize where I am, find myself at Vence, in the painter's house with the door open, the garden. And will all this tell you again, what above all this canvas means to me: a morning, a moment of happiness? It is just as much a moment of happiness as it is a door open on to the garden. Everyone is free to decide whether I am talking Italian or French in saying so.

If you said of Matisse that before him all painting was sombre, it might be false or unjust; but what matters is that it has been said, that faced with Matisse Van Gogh has darkened, and Renoir and Monet, and Turner. What matters is that he is the painter of

whom, at one world-moment, we have said that, we have thought that, just as it has been said of a different painter at each half-century. There are painters who have held this glory, this role, to dazzle men for at least fifty years, men who can only see light. They are like a window opening out of the human night, and thanks to them young people get an idea of sunshine.

The arrival of Henri Matisse as a painter in the last days of the nineteenth century when all men dressed in black, cannot be looked-on as anything but a new beginning, a revivifying of our eyes. The Italian Renaissance did the same thing, in so far as its painters dared to look straight at the shining nakedness of bodies. Henri Matisse dared to look, without the help of the spectacles of learned perspective, at the nakedness of light. We feel that several generations have been intoxicated with it.

In his letter of January 23rd, 1845, written to Sutton Sharpe, Stendhal talks about David with enthusiasm. He writes: *In 1789, a man disdains servile copying of his predecessors and finds a new way of imitating nature. The applause of a captious century and carping critics proclaim him great. Immediately the rabble of imitators starts yapping at his heels. Instead of searching like him inside nature or in antiquity, for forms and head-expressions which could give the greatest pleasure to their contemporaries, they copy David's works, and turning towards us critics, are astonished to find us making fun of them.*

All this applies marvellously to Matisse, almost word for word. Has he not found a new way of imitating Nature? And hasn't he more imitators than any other painter, people who, like David's followers, imitate his manner without noticing that what gives its value is the movement of spirit determining it, which is completely contrary to their imitativeness. I realize quite well that, for Stendhal, it is no coincidence that the opening sentence runs: *In 1789, a man disdains the servile copying of his predecessors . . .* Isn't this the same as saying: *My opinions on painting are those of the extreme left.* And, in 1825, Louis David is in exile and it is dangerous to say: *It's a pity that such a painter does not live among us . . .* etc. Of course the parallel between David and Matisse must not be pushed too far. But, after all, consider the moment when painting changed its fate under the fingers of young Matisse; isn't it the time of the Dreyfus Affair just as it was 1789 for David (even though Matisse was just twenty then and David was forty in '89)? Then he found a new way of following Nature, and that is the essential point,

even though he had not a glimmering of awareness of the great happenings in contemporary society, they carried him along without him knowing anything about them. The fact is that there cannot but be connections between such great happenings and the discovery of a new way of following Nature; the degree of awareness in the painter adds nothing.

For me, the greatness of Henri Matisse is definitely in his discovery of a *new way of following Nature*, and this gives him his unique place in the art of our time. Everyone knows that this great painter never works without a model: he has said, true, that the model or Nature means for him a spring-board for the next leap. But, after the imitators who have merely copied the *effect* of his painting, other disciples have arrived who have seen only this jump in his developments, this breaking of barriers, and they have thought themselves capable of doing without the spring-board, doing without Nature. They have only retained one expression of Matisse's teaching, and what we find in them is no longer a copy of his work, but a caricature. If Matisse has given the world new eyes, they think they can do the same by putting out their own. For in the magnificent story where Giotto, Raphael, Vermeer, Velasquez, Watteau, Dardin, Manet, like Henri Matisse, are on the track of the same human dream, what they follow is a dream of a common stuff; namely things as they are.

The young men of the 19th century, such as we see them in novels, (Julien Sorel, Rastignac, Frederic Moreau, Jiques Vingtras, Bel-Ami), the representatives of the tragic generations, 1830 (young Musset), 1848 (the young Baudelaire), 1871 (the young Rimbaud) found in French art the material of strange dreams; they studied *Marat Murdered* or *Lepelletier on His Death Bed* by David; *Ship of Medusa* by Géricault or Delacroix's *Massacres of Scio*; *Maximilian's Execution* by Manet or Courbet's *Studio*. This mental background obviously suited them. The century saw three great exiles among French painters: Louis David, Gustave Courbet, Paul Gauguin. Over fifty years of intensive work, during the time between the Zola episode and the experiences of Bikini, Henri Matisse has given three generations a completely different perspective for their dreams.

From *Dessert* to *Jazz*, with pictures like *Dance*, *Reading*, *Red Fishes*, *Marocains*, the whole series of odalisques, the *Still-life with*

Magnolias, Couch, up to the faces of *Fleurs du Mal* and *Still-life with Fleur de Lys*, he has gone on building a world not without rebukes for his serenity of soul. The contrast with the museum of the 19th century of which I spoke is striking. There are many ways of analysing the contrast. The young people of our epoch are neither Julien Sorel nor Vingtras nor Bel-Ami. It is not absolutely certain that this contemplation of the wide calm landscape of Matisse has turned them away from violence. Nothing in our life over recent years can really let us think that. But maybe, at the heart of human violence, another sun has risen . . . At the beginning of the 19th century, to imitate a famous phrase, *Happiness was a new idea in Europe*. A hundred years is not too long to make this star rise. And everyone may be quite sure that the work of Henri Matisse is a tremendous justification of happiness.

(The problem, they tell me, is to know if contemplation of devised imaginary happiness turns one away from the struggle for happiness. That means to say that exhibitions are vacuums for those who look at them and never sow anger in their hearts. It seems to me that common experience refutes this objection . . .)

I have said somewhere that I hold Henri Matisse to be the Anti-Sartre. This is to do great honour to the adaptor of Heidegger in the literary field. Please take it as a convenient way of making my meaning clear: I believe very profoundly that it is the active search for happiness which characterizes man in the twentieth century; that for this reason he can do nothing but reject a "sickness of the century" based on that of the previous century, that of Musset: and that finally, Matisse today, in this war for the good, is like a great banner waving.

And you in America know that even at the head of an army in rags the flag does not set forth its scars and stripes, but its stars.

Jack Lindsay

CHARLES DICKENS HIS LAST DAYS : WITH A SUMMARY OF HIS ACHIEVEMENT

EDWIN DROOD WAS NEVER TO BE FINISHED. THE pressures of anxiety were too great. Dickens had scarcely found this return to his creative faculty than he was longing to get away from it, back to direct contact with the people. Away from the painful effort to define psychologically and artistically the sources of discord, the deep tensions between himself and society. Away into the direct miming of the murder impasse in the Sykes-and-Nancy scene, with its accusation and its appeal to pity.

He promised to give twelve more readings, beginning January 1870; and opened at a rented house in London with a show of the "murder" at three o'clock with the morning for friends. The actors and actresses present were astounded, and his pulse went up from 72 to 112. Afterwards he spent ten minutes on a sofa, wrestling for breath. But he went on with the series at St. James's Hall, with electrifying effect. On March 15th he read for the last time. "From these garish lights I vanish now for evermore with a heartfelt, grateful, respectful, and affectionate farewell." Weeping, he stumbled off. In all he had cleared about £45,000.

In February George Hogarth died and was buried in Kendal Green cemetery, with the once-beloved Mary Hogarth. In March Dickens found that the symptoms of physical break-up were recurring; he could read only the right-hand half of the names over the shops. His left hand was now generally in a sling. His speech had been getting confused; in the last readings his son noted that he said "Pickswick" or "Picnic" or "Peckswicks" for "Pickwick."

The bad effect of the "murder" scene on his health had been clear from the very first, and his friends had tried vainly to dissuade him from going on with it; but he could not resist its morbid excitement. He kept on referring to it as if it were an actual

murder. "The foot goes on famously. I feel the fatigue in it (four Murders in one week) but not overmuch. It merely aches at night." He loved to note its terrifying effect. "B. had a seat behind the screen, and was nearly frightened off it, by the murder. Every vestige of colour left his face when I came off, and he sat staring over a glass of champagne in the wildest way." "I am glad you are coming to the Murder on the second of March." "I am sitting at a side-window looking up the length of Princes Street, watching the mist change over the Castle and murdering Nancy by turns." To Mary Boyle: "The crime being completely off my mind, and the blood spilled, I am (like many of my fellow-criminals) in a highly edifying state to-day." At Clifton, "I should think we had a dozen or twenty ladies taken out stiff and rigid, at various times. It became quite ridiculous."

He himself was aware of the connection between his agitated state and the Staplehurst accident.

At Chester last Sunday I found myself extremely giddy, and extremely uncertain of my sense of touch, both in the left leg and left hand and arms. . . . I had an inward conviction that whatever it was, it was not gout. I also told Beard, a year after the Staplehurst accident, that I was certain that my heart had been fluttered, and wanted a little helping. That the stethoscope confirmed; and considering the immense exertions I am undergoing, and the constant jarring of express trains, the case seems quite intelligible.

But nothing short of serious breakdown and the insistence of the doctors stopped him; and even then, after the period of rest in which he began *Drood*, he madly returned to murder-mime that was shattering him.

We can now better understand the forces closing in on him and killing on June 9, 1870, the anniversary of the accident. The murder-exposure of the mime had conclusively wrecked his health and brought about the first stages of a schizophrenic paralysis as expression of hopelessly unresolved inner conflict. But against this he had struggled in *Drood* to grasp artistically what was at stake in the anguish rending him. He had projected himself as Jasper, the frustrated lover and artist, who murdered the youth who supplanted him—but all in vain. Helena-Ellen turned into the exposer, the enemy worming out the truth which will force Jasper-

Dickens into the position of recognized guilt where he must bring together his divided levels of consciousness, his dream-self and his everyday-self. Where, then, will the moment of intolerable pressure emerge? Surely at the point when Datchery-Helena gets indisputably on his trail, and the exposure is inescapable.

That, anyhow, is the point where he died; the point where he broke off the narrative. That was the point when he could no longer go on living. He died of sheer spiritual strain and shock.

Politically, he maintained his essential principles to the end. The statements of his last year express his boundless faith in men, his boundless hatred of Parliament and the State. His shrewdness of insight, which had made him prophesy the American Civil War some twenty years before it happened, appears in his forecast of the Paris Commune. Writing in May 1869, he said:

I don't know how it may be with you, but it is the fashion here to be absolutely certain that the Emperor of the French is fastened by Providence and the fates on a throne of adamant expressly constructed for him since the foundations of the universe were laid. He knows better, and so do the police of Paris, and both powers must be grimly entertained by the resolute British belief, knowing what they have known, and doing what they have done through the last ten years. What Victor Hugo calls "the drop-curtain, behind which is constructing the great last act of the French Revolution," has been a little shaken at the bottom lately, however. One seems to see the feet of a rather large chorus getting ready.

II

How may we best sum up Dickens's achievement? In a career which takes in such a huge span of human change and manages to give artistic expression to that change, there are endless points of interest, which demand explication. Here we must concentrate on certain essentials.

First, there is the huge span which Dickens covers. Very few writers on his work seem to be even vaguely aware of the remarkable inner development which it reveals. If dimly conscious of a deepening gloom in the later works, they put it down to irritability or unhappiness in the domestic sphere. Criticism of Dickens has so far been very largely at the level which Shakespearian criticism clung to before 1800. Dickens is not of Shakespeare's stature; but

the comparison is not altogether inept. For Dickens is the first writer in England after Shakespeare (except Blake) who is centrally and continuously aware of the problem of dissociation.

He begins in a pre-industrialist world, partly borrowed from childhood fantasy and partly borrowed from eighteenth-century novelists like Smollett. He moves step by step into the hell of the actual world, always consolidating his position by the building-up of significant symbols that grasp the basic plight of men. The fusion of these symbols and the realistic depiction of the world goes on all the while, till it reaches the major definitions of *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, and *Our Mutual Friend*—with *Great Expectations* as the more personal commentary on the situation, and *Edwin Drood* as a masterly epilogue which sets out the tensions of the next phase of life and art.

Even Balzac, Dostoevsky, or Tolstoy cannot show such an orderly progression of penetrating definitions illuminating the fate of man under capitalism in all its aspects. This progression it is that makes the comparison with Shakespeare necessary and relevant.

We can put the claim in another way. Dickens defines in his work all the pangs of national growth from the first stages of an emerging petty-bourgeois (still implicating many pre-industrialist elements of festival fellowship and hospitality) right on up to the point of conflict beyond which lies the full egalitarian harmony that transcends all existing relationships. Thus his work spans the whole process of nationhood, and defines the various conflicts and tensions of that process, the discovery of dissociation and the alienation of man from his fellows and his own essence, the stages of struggle against the dissociative forces, and the intuition (uttered in symbolic forms) of the resolving unity. He and Blake are still the prophets of our epoch.

What I am discussing is not any explicit statement of ends, but the total direction of a definition: the artistic integration. For in such an integration the term *artistic* is always to be equated with the term *human*. Dickens (with Blake) is the writer who gives full expression to the human forces caught up in the throes of national development, moving powerfully from folk-levels to the resolving and unifying levels of socialism, and, in between, defining all the complex conflicts of love and fear, dissociation and integration. Blake, in the primary period of uprooting, gave deep poetic ex-

pression to the whole arc of transformation; Dickens, coming in the secondary phase, gave an extended novel-expression to the same arc. Now, as we reach the end of the arc, we can pick up their struggle anew, understand it at last, and find the forms that carry it forward through the decisive final phase.

Yet this steady unfolding of the fate of dissociated man in terms of dynamic imagery which looked forward beyond the dissociation, was made by a writer who managed to keep a general popularity in the Victorian world. How can we speak of the revolutionary virtue and integrity of a man who remained a best seller to Victorian audiences?

That question goes to the heart of the terrible strain that tugged at Dickens all his life after the first simple burst of creative energy. He gained his popularity, his union with the Victorian audience, at a moment of general upheaval and transition. He drew on popular sources and on the eighteenth-century novelists, and built up a world of bonhomie and hospitable happiness, a nostalgic picture which consoled and heartened in a callous society. Almost at once (even before he had finished *Pickwick*) he had discovered the other side of the picture and begun introducing it into his passionate imagery. His readers felt in his work, not only the consolations of a lost Eden (ultimately the family bosom), but also the pang of loss, the imagery of all the fears they felt in a world not understood, a world busily bent on excluding them from all satisfactions of love and peace.

Here lay the function of Dickens's sentimentality—an expression of the overwrought emotions of men at this difficult moment of loss and thwarted development. To understand it fully we must explore the psychological mechanism of this sentimentality, its relation to his childhood, to Fanny and his mother, to Mary Hogarth and Mary Weller. But what gave that mechanism its social and artistic import was the way in which it set him in immediate union with the vast homeless pang of the people in the convulsions of change. Without it he would never have laid the basis for his unity with the mass audience and his capacity to grasp the inner structure of historical crisis. Its weakness lay in the tendency to smudge out conflict in the fathomless pang of the tear, the intolerable sense of shared loss. But it was humanly sound while the astringent gusto of his delight in life and his savage hatred of greed and oppression accompanied it.

Thus in the earlier stages of his work he built that strong basis of union with his public that was able to weather the difficult strains of the later years.

If we can imagine him somehow having written *Little Dorrit* in the 'fifties without the preceding works, we can see that he would never have managed to get the work across to the general public as he did. If he managed to get it published, it would have been furiously rejected on all sides.

When we look at his life, we see how bitterly hard he found it to keep on writing almost from the very start. All the themes which stirred his creative faculty had at their core a deep-going antagonism to the major trends of respectable society. Being built as he was, having reached expression by the road he had, he could neither set himself simply into opposition with the trends about him, nor accept them in any terms used by their exponents. He remained a lone fighter—and in that there may be detected his petty-bourgeois origins. But if we see only that, we see little. His lone fighting derived in the long run from his need to fight for a concept of unity that lay far ahead and had no hope of actualization in his world. On the one hand, he stands for all the constructive and brotherly elements going to build up the nation; on the other hand, he is too aware of the actual contradictions and distortions everywhere in the contemporary situation to take any obviously partisan position. He speaks for the soul of the struggle, and therefore for a future in which the existing contradictions will be humanly resolved. For this fully human resolution he is an uncompromising fighter, a consistent partisan.

Hence the enormous strain he felt from the moment he introduced the prison episode into *Pickwick*. (Personally, much of the strain expressed itself as a fear of exposure as a jail-bird's son, who had worked in a blacking factory; but this fear was only a rationalization of a much deeper conflict between himself and society.) He had to keep his union with the struggling, broken, aspiring human being of his world, and yet he had to speak in terms of a resolving unity which did not yet possess the means of actualizing itself. If he failed on either count, he failed as an artist—and also went bankrupt. Hence the important part that financial responsibility play in his life (with far-reaching effects on his work, its themes and its characters). He had to go on making money, but he could not write powerfully unless he remained true

to himself, and if he remained true to himself he threatened to lose his public by too explicit attack on the ruling values of society.

Therein lies the tug-of-war that made him so restless, so hectically happy or unhappy, so unable to find any secure personal relationships, boisterously expansive and yet always aware of a cold reservation.

When, however, the utmost has been said about his compromises, confusions, and obliquities, there remains as the central dynamic of his work a critical vision which we can only call revolutionary, since it draws its creative virtues from a fundamental rejection of existing values. Bernard Shaw has well brought out this point. "Dickens never regarded himself as a revolutionist, though he certainly was one. His implacable contempt for the House of Commons . . . never wavered." He points out that Thackeray could write as fiercely about the ruling classes, and yet Thackeray remained a bourgeois; for he had a basic agreement on social doctrine with the persons he reviled. Dickens had a basic disagreement. "*Little Dorrit* is a more seditious book than *Das Kapital*." An exaggeration, but a pardonable one.

Dickens's work grew up steadily out of a ferment of popular forms and forces. *The key nature of such popular elements is to be found in the emphasis on the notion of transformation and on all images or characters that seem to embody the transformative processes.* Dickens found his deepest contact with these elements through his subtle and persuasive use of the day-dream, the childhood fantasy. It is because he always fuses the fantasy with realism that he redeems realism from its bourgeois distortion (naturalism) and shows himself an outstanding upholder of the great creative tradition which the triumph of the bourgeoisie threatened. The mass tradition is one of fantasy, moving between dream-image and poetic symbol; naturalism (i.e. realism minus fantasy) is historically the bourgeois form of expression. Dickens captures this form and re-fuses it with fantasy, orientates it towards the concept of transformation.

It is precisely the great creative power in Dickens which has been belittled by those who, one way or another, employ a naturalistic critique—Taine or G. H. Lewis in Dickens's own day, E. M. Forster in ours. Taine thought Dickens's image-making power to be monomaniacal; Lewis called it hallucinative. ("Dickens once declared to me that every word said by one of his characters was distinctly *heard* by him; I was at first not a little

puzzled to account for the fact that he could hear language so utterly unlike the language of real feeling, and not be aware of its preposterousness; but the surprise vanished when I thought of the phenomena of hallucination.") Forster finds Dickens's world flat and three-dimensional—i.e. is perfectly blind to the spiritual depths from which Dickens's characters emerge with their dynamic energies. Such an attitude is quite logical if one has no sense whatever of the creative unity of a Dickens novel. Then what could one see but a crowd of galvanic marionettes, strange figures of theatric violence wandering in a mad and yet prearranged void? Forster by his comment gives away that he himself lives in an utterly unreal world, in which the knowledge of the key factor in experience, without which all experience is essentially unmeaning and pettily personal, is totally missing. Dickens is the poet who knows simultaneously what alienation and union mean in capitalist society.

Barker Fairley says of Goethe's *Faust*, in reply to Santayana's complaint that Faust does not develop: "The development is in the poem as a whole, not in its supposed hero." The point is equally true of Dickens's important novels. The comment that his characters are marionettes, bright, exciting, over life-size, has its slight measure of truth, in so far as it points to the folk-elements of humour and symbolism in his work; but in the form in which it is usually made (with the implication that the people lack Soul or Inwardness), it shows a sad lack of response to Dickens's creative method and its importance for the post-1830 world. Like Goethe, he makes a fundamentally lyrical approach, and this means that his figures are not Shakespearian persons realized individually but fitting into a single symbolic conception, or Ibsen characters in whom the pattern of unconscious memory is psychologically united with naturalism as both fate and revelatory liberation. His people are lyrical images which gain profundity and symbolic significance through their relation to a total concept, a total movement, born out of a personal tension. The Shakespearian and Goethean methods are equally valid; the virtue of either depends on the extent to which the personal tension is realized in unity with the enviroing pressures of history. Dickens, from this angle, shows up as a creator of the highest order; and to call his people flatly three-dimensional is to miss the terrific inwardness of the whole concept which reacts on each single figure, giving it a depth of emotional overtones.

The best statement of his method is perhaps that made by himself in later years:

It does not seem to me to be enough to say of any description that it is the exact truth. The exact truth must be there; but the merit or art in the narrator, is the manner of stating the truth. As to which thing in literature, it always seemed to me that there is a world to be done. And in these times, when the tendency is to be frightfully literal and catalogue-like—to make the thing, in short, a sort of sum in reduction that any miserable creature can do in that way—I have an idea (really founded on love of what I profess), that the very holding of popular literature through a kind of popular dark age, may depend on such fanciful treatment.

That goes to the very heart of the problem. In a “popular dark age”—an age when the mass audience reasserts itself but in situations of the direst self-alienation—the carrying on of the vital popular elements, fantasy and imagery of dream-transformation, is the only way in which to keep alive the great tradition of art and to defeat the bourgeois dissociation of naturalism.

Here Dickens turns out, in his own way, to be making exactly the same kind of protest as the great Romantic and Symbolist poets—though he was inevitably unaware of the relation. Those poets proclaimed the need for a new organic integration in art and life, and, in a society falling away into worse dissociations, they fought to act as pathfinders towards the harmonies that men would need in completing their revolt against the dehumanizing pressures. By his fantasy-method Dickens picks up all that has been most poetically vigorous in our tradition, re-creates it on a new level, and sets his dynamite inside the bourgeois form, the novel. Into the novel he blasts the poetic tradition (which includes Shakespeare and folk-tale, transformative images on the high tragic level or at the folk-level of marvel, burlesque, dream-tale). He thus completes on a grand scale the work which the Gothic novel, the novel of fantasy and sensibility, the *roman noir*, had begun.

Bulwer-Lytton, in 1845, in his preface to *Night and Morning*, had given the best contemporary statement of what was at issue. “The vast and dark Poetry around us—the Poetry of Modern Civilization and Daily Existence, is shut out from us in much, by the shadowy giants of Prejudice and Fear. He who would arrive

at the Fairy Land must face the Phantoms." *The vast and dark Poetry around us, the Poetry of modern civilization and daily existence*: those words go to the very heart of the artistic problem, and they reveal the link between the work of Bulwer and Dickens and that of the French symbolists. But though Bulwer has done his best, the proud claim with which he continues can only be truly taken into the mouth of Dickens: "Betimes, I set myself to the task of investigating the motley world to which our progress in humanity has attained, caring little about misrepresentation. I incurred what hostility I provoked, in searching through a devious labyrinth for the footprints of Truth."

III

Now, if what I have said is true, what becomes of his influence? If his attitudes are fundamentally revolutionary, do they peter out in misconceptions, falsifications—till Chesterton can get away with a picture of him as a roaring loon of gusto, or Forster can seem to sniff validly at his tremendous universe of creation as at a flat shadow-show? Or does his work find devious ways, in the rapidly extending and complicated situation of world capitalism, to reassert its basic energy and stir further artistic developments along the same lines?

If one looks at England, it seems at first glance as if Dickens's influence does indeed peter out. Clearly, he has a strong effect, directly or indirectly, on the post-1848 novelists of Victorian England, the Brontës, Trollope, Collins, Reade, George Eliot; but they move, on the whole, steadily towards naturalism. Enough of the grand tradition remains in their work to give it breadth, dignity, fullness; but the weakening side of their definition shows up in the epigones who succeed them. Dickens's influence seems fairly well quenched.

True, he entered powerfully into the lives of writers like Swinburne and William Morris, though he did not directly affect their styles. More importantly, he had a strong effect on Ruskin, helping to bring about the redirection of his energies from art criticism to a method which embraced both art and social problems in a single concept of integration. *Unto this Last*, the decisive work of revolt by Ruskin, reveals this effect of his. But still we are far from finding any successor in the realm of fiction who carries on his work.

The successor is, however, there: George Bernard Shaw, who

has abundantly paid tribute to the decisive impact on his life of works like *Little Dorrit* and *Our Mutual Friend*. I do not wish here to enter into any examination of the strengths and weaknesses of Shaw; but even a cursory glance shows that his great virtue has been the fact that throughout his work he is aware of people as living in capitalist society. This it is which marks him out from all the other writers of his period in England. And this virtue he owed first to Dickens, and then to Marx. Dickens gave him the vision of what the alienating pressures meant, and Marx gave him intellectual confidence.

Other writers, from Gissing to Wells, owed much to Dickens; but they did not share the fully penetrative sense that Shaw had of Dickens's essential meaning.

Dickens's influence has then been by no means negligible in Britain; but it is to the European novel in general that we must look to the full fertilizing results of his work. In France and even more in Germany he helped to broaden the sphere of the novel; but it was in Russia and Scandinavia that he found his natural kinsmen. For there it was that a number of factors made possible the rebirth of the novel as a great tragic medium. Through Dostoevsky and Strindberg, on whom he had a profound effect at key moments of their development, his influence broadly enters the whole European stream.

Here were writers who were able to carry on in terms of the post-1860 situation his awareness of what self-alienation meant, and to apply in various ways his method of fantasy-projection and dream-process. (Strindberg's novels, in which Dickens's influence is paramount, must be recalled here; and it was the re-reading of *The Christmas Stories* that, in Strindberg's own account, restored his faith in life and enabled his final poetic period to come about.)

To examine the new forms, the new tensions, which his ideas and methods assume in Dostoevsky and Strindberg, would require another book; but I must emphasize the kinship between them and Dickens to bring out the part which Dickens has played in the European developments since 1850. For this an aspect of those developments which is little known or understood in England.

It is because I believe that the revaluation of Dickens's work and influence can yet play a very important part in the cultural struggle of to-day, that I have written this study. The "dark

popular age" is still with us, is with us, indeed, to an extent that Dickens could not have guessed at. Mass-media like radio and the cinema make incomparably more pressing the problem of transmuting naturalistic and decadent forms with a new life, a poetic life which will utter the truth of the human condition and recapture tradition. Dickens is the master who has shown how this can be done; his method is more relevant to-day than ever.

I do not mean that we should start trying to write novels like Dickens's or ape his tricks of style. I mean that we should realize his fundamental method of fusing dream-process and realism in terms of essential human conflict, and find our own ways of relating this method to contemporary issues.

Dickens is still ahead of us.

IV

And so we come back to the June day when the strains pulled him to pieces. Though he had had to give up his readings, he had not given up intentions of appearing in private theatricals once more. Not long before, he had told a friend that his lifelong ambition had been to have complete charge of a great theatre; now he produced three plays at a show given at Lady Freake's on June 2nd, with his daughters in leading parts. In May 1869, he had made his will, which, as its first item, left £1,000 to Ellen; and now on June 2, 1870, he added a codicil leaving *All the Year Round* to Charley. (He left almost £100,000 in all, showing how unnecessary had been the toils that shortened his life.)

On Monday, June 6th, he walked once more over to Rochester with his dogs, and leant on the fence before Restoration House. This house had appeared in *Great Expectations* as Miss Havisham's House.

I had stopped to look at the house as I passed; and its seared red-brick walls, blocked windows, and strong green ivy clasping even the stacks of chimneys with its twigs and tendons, as if with sinewy old arms, had made up a rich attractive mystery, of which I was the hero. Estella was the inspiration of it, and the heart of it, of course. . . .

I mention this in this place, of a fixed purpose, because it is the clue by which I am able to be followed into my poor labyrinth.

Now he stood looking in fascination at this place; and the people who noticed him said that the house would appear in the next instalment of *Edwin Drood*. And so it did; in the last

instalment he ever wrote, as "The Vinery" (after the open space before the house, known as "The Monk's Vineyard").

The House of Love, the House of Childhood.

Next day he drove to Cobham Wood. In the evening he hung up Chinese lanterns in the recently added conservatory.

On Wednesday he worked at *Edwin Drood* in the chalet. At the dinner-table he told Georgy that for an hour he had been feeling ill. He stood up and almost fell over. She caught him in time and tried to help him over to the sofa. He muttered, "On the ground."

These were his last coherent words. He sank into a kind of coma, dying about six in the evening next day. Mamie and Katie were called in from London as soon as he was found to have suffered a stroke, and Katie went back to tell her mother. But it was not Kate Dickens who came in haste to the house of death; it was Ellen Ternan.

The last words he had written were those with which *Edwin Drood* ends—the passage where Datchery, having had his talk with Opium Sal, feels at last that he has definite evidence against Jasper the murderer. "I mention this in this place, of a fixed purpose, because it is the clue by which I am able to be followed into my poor labyrinth."

Jack Beeching

FLAUBERT AND BOURGEOISPHOBIA

AFTER FLAUBERT, NOVEL-WRITING HAS TURNED ITSELF into a self-conscious vocation. His Norman face with its drooping moustaches becomes an icon towards which each one of us does a reverence. The subsequent great men—Henry James, Proust and Joyce—model themselves upon his devotion to the labours of art. His name has become one of the worn counters of studio argument, and now he is regarded as an ornament of "Western Civilization"—the contemporary euphemism for that bourgeois society which he loathed and

repudiated. His views and habits, torn from the living context of their century, are adduced to justify in his devotees the most absurd romantic attitudes and private rejections of reality.

The time has come to assert that Flaubert is "un-American" in the widest and best sense of the word.

His victorious greatness springs from the conflict between his times, and three human qualities, specific to the modern artist, which in him were most vigorous and pronounced.

First—his intransigent hatred of capitalism. At a time in France when the bourgeoisie were dominant, making social life in their own image, having the catchphrases of commercial practice intoned in ecclesiastical phraseology from the altar steps of cathedrals, Flaubert loathed them and systematically held them up to ridicule. The class which he thus loathed had by a kind of osmosis permeated with its ideas and habits the aristocracy (M. Dambreuse in *L'Education Sentimentale* was a count before he became a millionaire). That section of the masses with which one came into contact—the decent working men, the little artisans, respectable and timid—were equally corrupted and shaped in the image of the masters. ("The bourgeoisie is all of humanity, including the people"). Those who underwent the bourgeoisifying process included even the whores—the Goncourts note how the women of the boulevard discussed the proportion of their earnings that it was sensible to put in the Savings Bank.

Second—his heroically faithful obsession with reality in a repugnant world. In order to behave as an artist he had to deny himself recourse to those means of escape from the society he hated—scholarship, Oriental travel, debauchery or the romantic art coloured by them. He had voluntarily to swallow his daily toad, since toads were his chosen dish. One could be, and he was, briefly and by turns, a scholar, a traveller, a debauchee (and a romantic, partaking of all three), but one could not carry on an activity which required the taking of material from society unless sooner or later one came to terms with social life.

Third—his complete and epoch-making devotion to art. He chose, at a time when other men concerned themselves chiefly with the acquisition of money or the enjoyment of purchased pleasures, to carry on as a serious man of letters an activity devoid of either profit or respect. Money could certainly be made from authorship, even under the Press Laws of Napoleon III, but most

readily by men who were prepared to wind up a serial when it began to bore the readers. Honours were to be had—most simply by writing for the Government press or by promising to abstain from writing for the opposition press. But Baudelaire, Flaubert and the Goncourts, the most devoted artists of their time, were harrassed by the courts, made only trifling sums, and circulated chiefly through notoriety.

Other artists, naturally, have possessed these qualities, but it was the history of Flaubert's time which made them in his case so pronounced and so vital. He lived in a transformed, a deformed world compared with that of his towering predecessor, Balzac, and the differences between them are portentous.

A Legitimist and ultra-montane Catholic in the period of *enrichissez-vous*, Balzac was particularly fortunate in being able to adopt most thoroughly the classic attitude of the novelist—to participate in society with enthusiasm, and while yet participating to doubt, question and view critically. In the time spared from his work-debauches, during which he hacked out a masterpiece on the wide margins of his proof-sheets in a couple of months, he experienced society with an inflamed mind. Aristocrats, bankers, misers, peasants, even his landlady, became transposed from their social niche or were slid from a novel into life, so that he saw reality and the novel always with a double focus, perpetually transposed. On his deathbed the doctor he called for was one he had himself created.

He wrote when the bourgeoisie, avaricious, self-confident, expansive, had created even a monarch—Louis Philippe with his umbrella—in their own image. Factories, coal-mines, stocks and shares were the rage, pouring millions of money on their possessors; meanwhile traditional society was melting away. Balzac, who in an excess of enthusiasm had kissed, during 1830, the velvet upholstery on which had rested the arse of the last of the Bourbons, stared at the spectacle of a commercial society with fascinated horror. Admitting to himself the incompetence of those aristocrats who claimed his public Legitimist sympathies, clandestinely he admired Blanquist terrorism, with its heroic and insensate uprising of the very poor. The master criminal, incarnating these impulses from the lower depths of society, is almost the only character in his novels of whom apparently his approval is unreserved.

Flaubert himself knew as a young man the vibrant, apprehensive

Paris of before 1848, in which industry was pushing on commerce and banking for an extension of the franchise, and petty industry on the vast concerns with which it so disadvantageously competed, and the peasants on the bankers who held their mortgages, and the workmen on the employers who bled them with fines and denied them the right to organize. The sense of pressure, of urgency, of the imminence of liberty, conditioned the men of those years and separated them from their successors as did in our own time the expectation of war upon those who began to publish before 1939. "The reaction after 1848," Flaubert observed, "dug a gap between one generation and another."

Before *Bovary*, but after the sanguinary fiascos of 1848, in which his two closest friends (and friendship to him was vital) took opposite sides on the barricades, Flaubert travelled with the more reactionary of them for three years in the countries of the Near East.

This journey was not, as merely recording the fact might suggest, an unimportant event in his life. Before he left Marseille his writings were fluent, sentimental, slightly morbid. Afterwards he lost his rapidity, and settled to the patient toil which was to distinguish his life's work.

In the Orient he was able to act out his obsessive imagined debauches. For three years he subjected himself to exotic impressions, accumulating in memory the living imprints of his romantic urges and images. Colonization (and the Levant, towards which Flaubert travelled, was a traditional French sphere of influence) compensated the renegade liberals of the years after 1848 for their relative political impotence. Colonization was geographical romanticism. After his return, Flaubert talked of a novel about the new Orient, which wears black clothes and stiff collars. He had learnt that physical escape, geographically, from the society he loathed, was impossible, since the very act of travel was but a process of being carried forward, like a surf-rider, upon the rolling wave of industrial commerce.

The journey had not only a symbolic value, but also a notable actual effect, for he returned with his appearance radically changed. ("My hair," he said, "has fallen like the political opinions of my contemporaries.") The new Flaubert was capable of masterpieces.

Thus, in the years when revolution ebbed, when the Napoleon

of the Press Laws appeared as the ghoul at the end of the blind alley along which the devotees of bourgeois freedom were tempted, out of this complex of events emerged in the person of Flaubert an artist who personified modern realism. Modern as distinct from the realism of Balzac, or say Fielding, which was spontaneously produced by an artist gifted with the double focus, living in a vigorous, growing society. Modern because conscious—consciously withdrawn from the world of activity, where politics and journalism have been vitiated by Napoleon, and only money-making is permissible. Consciously, conscientiously struggling against the romantic dreams, the impulses towards romanticism, which in Flaubert were the more profound because they occurred as the symptom of his nervous disease (and who, coming from the vivid and stunning embraces of an imaginary houri, would wish to return to the adulteries of Emma Bovary?) And in Flaubert personally, the disease itself was a symptom of his withdrawal—the young man's half-deliberate psychosomatic device enabling him to exchange the banality of cramming law-books for the fertilizing leisure of an invalid's life at Croisset on the banks of the Seine.

Modern society one can assert, now that the process then unusual has since been repeated so often, imposes on the artist who tries to grapple with it realistically an ever-present state of intensity, of acute and uncomfortable sincerity, of being thrust constantly into dilemmas, of ineffectiveness, of venturing-and-withdrawing—all phases of life generally to be observed in the adolescent. Flaubert deliberately perpetuated his adolescence, aborted his personal development, throwing up an unwanted career in order to live in retirement with his mother and shape for himself the literary implements through which alone the reality of the contemporary world could be grasped.

Balzac could bankrupt himself in a commercial venture, and then recoup himself by using the experience to write a novel. But after 1848, art and action had become incompatible in bourgeois society, since the course of the revolution had done nothing but reveal to each class in turn its social impotence.

Yet—and this accounts in some measure for the fascinated hate-love relationship existing between Flaubert and his subject-matter—the dominant social class which he loathes and repudiates, the bourgeoisie, has itself after 1851 withdrawn from responsibility,

rejecting effective social action through control of the state, unable, in fact, even to govern without the aid of such another "good sword" as their progenitors called for on the first 18th Brumaire to protect them, then as now, against the mere chance of Red Revolution.

Flaubert, in other words, personified, epitomised in his personal experience, an analogous development of society. Living (safely within his income), his regular, middle-class life at Croisset, and anatomising the corpse of a class which when living had promised its protagonists liberty, equality and brotherhood, he was existing in hostile symbiosis upon the bourgeoisie, as the village gravedigger upon his neighbours.

His imitators of the present day place less emphasis on Flaubert's hatred of "Western Civilization" in its heyday of industrialism, than on his dedication to his medium, his apostleship, in their eyes, of *l'art pour l'art*. This dedication has two aspects, one of style, and one of form or creative attitude.

Flaubert's stylistic labours had a contemporary reference and justification. Current moods of hypocrisy, the censorship, above all, the debasement of the romantic into the hack, were provoking a disintegration of language. Even Balzac, only a romantic by courtesy of the absurd hack-novels he poured out under a pseudonym before the age of 30, had thereby so corrupted his style that he himself had to admit its imperfections. "What a man Balzac would have been if he had known how to write!" remarked Flaubert. Dumas' fiction-factory is notorious. And Gautier, who in his rose-pink waistcoat had led the embattled Romantics into action on the first night of *Hernani*, and at 24 years of age had shocked his elders with the concupiscent elegancies of *Made-moiselle Maupin*, was a couple of decades later so broken to the business of hacking out copy as to confess that he could only write in the print-shop of the *Moniteur*, with the machines grinding and a restless boy waiting to take sheet after sheet to be set by the compositors as soon as written.

Flaubert's consciously perfect French, his synthetic and euphonious prose deliberately modelled upon "a few pages of Montesquieu and La Bruyere", was consistent with and flowed from his hatred of the bourgeoisie, who turned artists into hacks and required from them not style but pungent journalese.

In his first and principal work, *Madame Bovary*, he produced a

novel which is in form a model of conscious realism; constituting therefore a turning-point in the history of prose fiction. The form was neither imitated from earlier novelists, nor built up from an arbitrary social theory. This was not realism of the photographic, naturalistic sort, derived from note-taking and deliberate observation, the realism of the Goncourts and Zola. Nor was it, as in the case of Balzac, achieved spontaneously, synthetically, by the double focus.

Flaubert's realism derives from a constant, deliberate and systematic struggle against romanticism; a struggle of which every page and almost every paragraph bears the impress. He fights all the time to mitigate, to overcome, the loose romantic phrase, or those romantic effects which rise most readily to his mind.

Thus Emma Bovary is not seduced, as was first planned, during the ball at the chateau—that consummation is left for the Rouen cab with its blinds down and its bedevilled driver longing for a drink. Her suicide is clinically described; there are no languors in the mode of *La Dame au Camélias*.

Hence also the writer's paralysing agonies of imaginative reconstruction, the dilatoriness and self-mistrust, the celebrated masses of erasures. Hence his sudden torpor and need for sixteen hours sleep when the somnolent town of Yonville is being described, his symptoms of infatuation when Emma falls in love, of poisoning when she takes arsenic. Hence, finally, the feeling when reading him that one has taken benzedrine—everything is more important, each detail is significant, and the narrative moves with that fascinating combination of novelty and precision achieved by slow motion films of flowers coming into blossom.

But Flaubert's innate romantic impulses, derived from the current moods of the literary milieu within which he developed, are all the time pressing, probing, seeking for an opportunity of expression. This sense of barely avoiding, time and again, a situation more proper to the novelette, gives to the narrative in *Bovary* its febrile lucidity.

Madame Bovary is a French *Anna Karenina*. Both were started on impulse, when a casual anecdote crystallised a mass of ruminations. In both the theme is adultery, but with the adulterous act having immense references beyond the circle of apparent implication. Anna, it has been argued, is the personification of a Russian impulse towards freedom, the purer and more idealized since in

nineteenth-century Russia freedom was a noble dream; (not until after 1905 did it become thoroughly plain that the freedom for which the Decembrists fought meant unrestricted hours in city factories and peasant indebtedness to the village kulak). Emma's striving for freedom is in comparison more absurd, more bound up with daydreams, more patently bound to fail; reflecting, in fact, the sophistication and disillusionment of three revolutions. Both women commit suicide, the one under that symbol of industrial progress a railway engine, the other through the indirect agency of Homais, who personifies all the cock-sure, foursquare shams and half-truths on which nineteenth-century commercial confidence was based.

"Madame Bovary, c'est moi." Flaubert informed inquirers who wished to know who had sat as model to the character. But he might with equal truth have said she was his mistress, whose adolescent memories he dredged for copy; or his mother, attentive, envious, also married to a provincial doctor, but in point of fact a brilliant surgeon, not, like Charles Bovary, an incompetent bungler (thus do jealous sons belittle the memory of their fathers). Or indeed his sister, whose marriage to a fool he regretted. And in fact every suburban street has its Bovary, participating in her feckless attitude, her day-dreaming, sometimes her adultery. The glossy women's magazines are bibles of Bovaryism, and the last retreats of the romantic attitude in literature.

Salammbô, according to its author, was written in order to give its readers "a bump of historical haschish." Bouilhet, the Rouen poet, in appearance the twin brother of Flaubert, radical candidate and barricade fighter in 1848, the loyal friend of peasant stock, had suggested the theme of Bovary and criticized each page as soon as written. But his instinct to encourage the realist in Flaubert could not withstand the disgusts that attack a writer at the end of a work, and which gripped Flaubert with particular intensity since his work had been so phenomenally laborious and the subject had incarnated so much that he loathed. ("Diarrhoea, bourgeois-phobia, boils," he remarked in a letter complaining of his efforts.) In *Salammbô* he turned for relief to a theme which would enable him to drug himself with the toil of impossible research, which brought the uncontaminated, might-have-been East to his mind's eye, and which permitted vast literary lingerings upon what was charming or striking in the visible world, or what was stimulating through being violent or atrocious.

It might be considered that as a reaction he was giving free rein to all those hankerings after an escape into romanticism, in the struggle against which the form of *Madame Bovary* had been perfected. The very prose, as if collapsing now that romantic sensations are being indulged, is complicated and elliptical—a tedious narrative with magnificent pages.

Yet the devil, expelled at the door, comes in again at the window. The scene, Carthage ("the rottenest civilization on the globe," he wrote to the Goncourts), was in the classic world a centre of luxury and commerce, like nineteenth century France. Like France, its social fabric rested upon an alien and potentially insurgent class, which at any time might destroy by a shake of the shoulders the civilization which it was supporting—in France the proletariat, in Carthage the military mercenaries. Polite society, the organized enjoyment of luxury, was sacrificed to the need of exorcising this spectre. The most ludicrous and offensive religions, the most outrageous dictatorships, the most callous slaughters, must be accepted to keep in check the menace of "the mob."

Flaubert pursues his fantastic researches with the ponderous thoroughness of a steam-roller crushing gravel. He complains that there is practically nothing about Carthage in the libraries (why then not write about, say, Gautier's romantic version of Egypt? Because that would not be France in disguise.) He visits Tunis, composes his set pieces—the battle, the famine, the rape—with all the lip-smacking meticulousness of a romantic turned decadent, and yet the real social movements of the nineteenth century are never lost sight of. A detailed parallel, incident for incident, can be traced between the insurrection of the mercenaries under Matho and the rising in 1848. The young men of Carthage drill, like Maxime du Camp and the other gilded youth of 1848, in the National Guard, which is intended as spearhead of attack against the rebellious mercenaries. Meanwhile, like the fathers of the young men in the National Guard, and their grandfathers in 1791, Hamilcar is buying up all the corn in Carthage in order profitably to speculate in starvation.

The description of the Carthaginian political structure is directly applicable to that of France under Louis Philippe. "This nation, knowing herself to be hated, clasped her money and her gods to her heart; and her patriotism was kept alive by the very

constitution of her government . . . wealth was the sole key to public office, and although authority and money always rested with the same families, people tolerated this oligarchy because there was always a hope of winning a share in it . . . the hundred members of the Council of Elders, who were themselves responsible to the Grand Assembly, or the general convention of all the rich. As for the two Suffetes, those relics of the Monarchy who were of less account than consuls . . . it was contrived that there should be every sort of rivalry between them, so that they might frustrate and weaken each other." (Orleanists and Legitimists?)

Having, in *Salammbô*, returned to the obsessive period of the revolution historically, Flaubert commences, in *L'Education Sentimentale* to return to it autobiographically. He tracks the origins of his pessimism back to the revolution.

L'Education Sentimentale is in some respects a Balzac novel of the subsequent generation. Regarded by Flaubert himself as his masterpiece, coldly received by the critics of the time, it subjects what may be called the classic illusions of the French novel to a cruel analysis.

Love is anatomized. The traditional and romantic love, celebrated by Stendhal and Balzac, of the ambitious provincial for the older married woman, is related to the physiological deprivations and sexual inexperience which give rise to it; around this substitute for mother love cluster the sophisticated or mercenary connexions which were not only correct but also inevitable in French society of the time, all accurately and horribly related to the incestuous attractions of mother-women like Mme. Arnoux and girl-children like little Louise Roque. (The possible circle of passionate relationships outside of marriage—mother-woman, prostitute, girl-woman—idealized even by the realists like Stendhal and Balzac, romanticized by their contemporaries, was later to be vulgarized by Flaubert's protégé and pale mirror-image, Maupassant, in *Bel-Ami*, where these relationships, instead of being shown as aspects of a central craving, are treated cynically as stepping-stones to a million francs.)

Flaubert indicates the stupidity and transience, not of sexual relations, but of the endeavour to use relations established in bed to obliterate or subsume the relationships encountered in a salon or on the Bourse. A central illusion of romanticism was that love could transcend social bestialities and become a substitute for, a

refuge from, social living. The bourgeois himself needed the particular variety of marriage which he sponsored so as daily to recharge in an atmosphere of husband-centred domesticity the batteries of self-confidence which competitive society exhausted; and in order to assure in a regular way the testamentary disposal of his property. But carnal passions did not in consequence erupt with any the less violence. So that the society, nominally grounded in reason and law, actually humming in a deceptive equilibrium as of a gyroscope from the mutually-cancelling tensions of thousands of competitive strivings, developed the half-world of orgy and debauch, where sexual relations were securely based on hard cash; and made of adultery an indoor game wherein the cuckold had at least the consolation of being with the bankrupt a common victim of the same creditor.

To the Naturalists a clinical study of the psychology of a prostitute was possible—a theme attempted by both the Goncourts and Zola. But to secure the approval of the advanced reading public in 19th century France one should not analyse so relentlessly the relation of men to their wives and mistresses; one should not show disdain when elaborating the machinery of seduction; one should not show how fashionable sentimentality leads to the brothel door—one should not, in fact, demonstrate so explicitly how Arnoux the business man and Cisy the aristocrat and Deslauriers the radical lawyer are all so many Bovarys in their relations with women, nor above all that the only unmercenary relationships possible in a money-ridden society are those with mothers, and with small girls, both of which suffer under the handicap of not being capable decently of consummation.

There are other things in life besides money, as the bourgeois is fond of remarking; love is the chief of these, and Flaubert had scraped the paint of romanticism from its face. But he had something to say about money, too. One feels that he was trying conscientiously to write a Balzac novel, and failing only because his subject-matter refused of its own volition to act in a Balzac way. Several scenes are lifted straight out of Balzac, and yet come to pieces in this new milieu of aborting revolution, which has robbed bourgeois modes of action of all certainty. The conversation of bankers and their wives is perceived as the quintessence of boredom, and, as the revolution proceeds, of a repetitive and maniac boredom. An orgy of which the like in Balzac's *Le Peau de*

Chagrin had been wonderful and brilliant, is suddenly rather sordid, not merely because Arnoux is there with his humdrum friends, but because an orgy's mechanism of sexual appetite titillated by perfumes and wit and given impulse by drink, is too clearly evident. A legacy which released Frederic from provincial boredom, a mortgage on the property of the man he hopes to cuckold, out of which he was cheated, occur as they do in real life, in a matter-of-fact, casual way—even money-making has lost its savour—the paraphernalia of business is there, but not its intensity. For business, an obsession in the pre-1848 days of industrial boom, is losing its excitement and becomes recondite, secure, respectable, spreading less like a fever than a fog, drowning in its uniform greyness the whole of decent society.

Arnoux's bankrupting passion for the copper glaze of Chinese porcelain is not a lust but an idiosyncrasy. Art has no nobility and demands no self-sacrifice—it has become an aspect of the normal processes of business, centred around the magazine *Industrial Art* which is filling the middle-class homes of France with mediocre engravings. And we have, for the second time in French literature, the character of an imperfect artist, but he is not a wit and figure of fun like Rameau's nephew, conscious of his lack of creativeness and exploiting his very lack, but become in Pellerin the conscious and pedantic theoretician of art, his memory filled with impressions from the galleries and facts from the text-books—of the stuff of which in our own day the principals of art-schools are made. Eventually the despised science, by giving Pellerin a camera, compensates him for the talent which he lacks. Though Flaubert's France, bourgeoisified though it was, had not yet begun as a general rule to accord honour more generously to the impotent than the creative—that was left for the century of which he wrote prophetically, "beauty will become a feeling useless to humanity, and art somewhere halfway between algebra and music." (Shades of the last commentary upon a commentary upon the verses of T. S. Eliot.)

Flaubert, the severer analyst, is less ready than Balzac at the creation of character because Balzac, incongruously the Catholic Legitimist, had furbished up for himself an outlook systematically hostile to that of that world in which he lived—bourgeois ideas themselves had neither attained social hegemony nor been exposed in the course of a revolution as a page of cowardly truisms.

Balzac was not, like Flaubert, to some extent involved in, identified with, the ideas which he criticized. For Flaubert, only bourgeois ideas were current, or even conceivable, and he supplemented his hatred of them simply by those additional ideas concerning the integrity and thoroughness of the artist which were necessary in order to carry on his work of analysis.

His revolutionaries are revealing in this respect. Why, he asks by inference, do they call themselves revolutionaries, since they seek to change nothing except their own social position? His revolutionaries disagree with each other, they are all differently labelled, but they are all bourgeois revolutionaries—extreme opinion is but an outcome of uncommonly desperate ambition. The most radical of them, Sénécal, is a Fourierist, and shows when working as a foreman in Arnoux's factory that for him (as for those other democrats who turned their rifles against the men who rose in the June days) the proletariat, those who reject capitalism outright, are not included in his category "the people." For him as for the Government Socialists of our own century, "the people" are always understood as being not miners and dockers but the right sort of people. In the end Sénécal makes his career—as a policeman, sabring the opponents of Napoleon's coup. And indeed the young men with whom he associated regard the coming revolution as a means of rising socially like their predecessors of 1789, which made generals of a dyer, a pedlar, a barber, a compositor. For Flaubert the proletariat exist only as the most suffering class; their rising is incomprehensible, destructive merely—attacking, perhaps necessarily, the civilization he knows, which like that of Rome may need and deserve a barbarian irruption. He does not apprehend their creativeness.

The critical stages in Frédéric's affaires with his three mistresses, the three steps in his sentimental education, coincide with the three distinct waves of the revolution. In the February rising, when bourgeois republicans in alliance with the labouring poor expel the king, Frédéric (who takes no real interest in these political events), makes his first assignation with Mme. Arnoux, the idealized bourgeoisie, a maternal type—an appointment which she does not keep.

In the June days, when the workers are rising and being beaten back, Frédéric has reached the peak of his relationship with Rosanette, the woman of the people, to whom he flies when

Mme. Arnoux disappoints him, and who bears his child.

As the revolution recedes he lays seige to Mme. Dambreuse, deceives Rosanette, plans a cynical and profitable marriage with this widow of a banker-aristocrat, but is repelled by her buying trinkets at the forced sale of Mme. Arnoux's effects, and actually rejects her on the eve of that very *coup d'état* by means of which Louis Napoleon became the receiver-in-bankruptcy of the betrayed aspirations of 1848.

Love, in brief, however much the romantic may see in it an escape from society, is in Flaubert's view subject as a microcosm of society to authentic social movements, and is fruitful or arid to the degree that it can find scope within larger freedoms than its own. And money in this epoch of revolutions is no longer synonymous with freedom.

Flaubert had learnt from his friend Turgenev how in a novel an insignificant personal reaction may have powerful social overtones. The inferences which a public used to eluding the czarist censorship were accustomed to draw were lost, however, on a French audience under the more subtle and paralysing tyranny of the accepted idea.

After 1848 social progress as the bourgeois knew it was impossible. There could only be a repetition, each time feebler and more vicious, of previous social movement, since the class which had shaped society in its image "would have sold France or the whole human race, to safeguard their own fortune, or to spare themselves a moment's uneasiness or embarrassment, or else out of sheer servility, through their instinctive reverence for brute strength." This remained true in 1871 and 1940.

After 1871 the social movement repeated itself, feebly and viciously, at the cost of the assassination by *mitrailleuse* of 30,000 French proletarians, with a brand-new Republic built by the men who would have "paid money for the pleasure of selling themselves" on the bones of the murdered Communards. Flaubert, aging, impoverished by his own generosity and sick from the results of youthful dissipation, began the obsessive effort of *Bouvard et Pecuchet*.

The jokes of the *Dictionnaire des Idées Reçues* and the *Sottisier*, this collection of trite sayings and absurd assertions typical of the bourgeoisie, begun in the self-confidence of youth and circulated privately among his friends, now became the foundation (amplified

by encyclopaedic reading) for a vast satire on every accepted idea, scholarly, ethical, scientific, religious, industrial. (In this public use of a private joke Flaubert reaches forward to the literary novelties of the 1920's and 30's.)

His two little clerks are content to copy, laboriously, hour after hour, lulling themselves by the mechanical and repetitive uselessness of the activity, until one of them inherits a fortune. They have all the illusions of respect for reason and confidence in material progress which Flaubert diagnosed as being, though widespread, least justifiable in the society of his time, and which he had personified earlier in the figure of Homais.

They retire to the country and begin a systematic examination of each constituent in contemporary culture. They examine both sides of all questions, and invariably find each ridiculous. They are Charlie Chaplins of the intellect—everything comes apart in their hands. Science in its many branches and applications, art, religion and the fashionable materialism which was its counterpart, illusions, unquestioned since the time of Rousseau, about the efficacy of education, all are earnestly examined and all disintegrate before their eyes. At last, their fortune expended, they return to the mechanical business of copying.

This neglected book reads sometimes like a script for Itma, sometimes like Kafka, sometimes like a nightmare. It bears the same relation to bourgeois society as did *Gargantua* to feudal society, is as destructive of illusions and as capable of many-layered interpretations, and collapses as readily into laughter. Although the book was written out of a serious passion, it cannot be read with a straight face. There must be a grin, even a wry one, since its serious intention is to make life meaningless by breaking to pieces the ideas that, willy nilly, have formed and shaped us all. Flaubert, franc-tireur of the intellect, smuggles in his moral anarchism, his rejection of dominant ideas, even contradictory ones, between a sneer and a chuckle. Because the author admits the cockeyed incident as counterpoint to his ideologies, the book develops a classic vitality. Simultaneously with their cerebration, the two old boys carry on a slapstick Sancho Panza existence. One boils the cat from highest scientific motives. The other seduces a quarter-virgin in mistake for the genuine article. Indeed, only because of Flaubert's love of life did he reject the world of his time and its ideas, which were and are throttling living people,

ossifying them, turning them into phantoms or caricatures.

Perhaps when capitalism is of interest only to historians, and a stockbroker is as quaint a figure as a goblin, it will be possible to read *Bouvard et Pecuchet* with a straight face and a clear conscience. Go out and buy a copy, because it won't be long now.

"E.T." ON D. H. LAWRENCE

A Letter To a Common Friend

I'M SORRY TO BE RATHER LATE IN RETURNING THE BOOK, but the spring-cleaning was fairly long and exhausting, and gave time neither for reading nor writing. Now it is over, and I am rejoicing in a clean house and a little leisure.

Well, your book will rank along with the other Laurentian literature; it is a document; and if it bears witness rather to the author than to the subject of the work, it is not the less interesting and significant. I can't wax enthusiastic about it, because it is concerned with that aspect of D.H.L. that I have always found least interesting. As an artist, when he is dealing with the immediate and the concrete, he is superb, but when he assays to be a thinker, I find him superficial and unconvincing, and quite soon boring. The Revelation of John of Patmos, and Apocalypse of D.H.L., can never have any but a secondary interest for me. I have never been able to read the biblical Revelations—when I have tried, I have soon felt that here was the basis for all the Old Moore's Almanacs that ever existed, and the guesses and speculations and the monstrous beasts are only wearisome. As a fragmentary and mutilated account of mankind's early attempts to understand his place in the universe, it *is* interesting, but that was not really D.H.L.'s concern with Revelations. His concern was to find some means of escape from that narrow prison of his own ego, and to do so he was prepared to assault the cosmos. So, whenever I read his almost delirious denunciations of what he pretended to regard as Christianity I only see the caged panther lashing himself into a fury to find some way out of his strait prison.

D.H.L. was a man in bondage and all his theorisings and

philosophisings only bear witness to his agony. The more I ponder upon his life and his death, the more significant becomes to me the fact of his suffering—of course I don't mean his physical suffering, *that* was the direct outcome of his spiritual anguish at his own frustration. Well, why was he frustrated, and why was he in bondage? Some of his own words come to my mind. The day before his mother's funeral we went a walk together, and during that walk I reproached him for having become engaged to X. Y. I said: "You ought not to have involved X. in the tangle of our relationship." . . . D.H.L.'s reply took my breath away; he said . . . "With *should* and *ought* I have nothing to do." If you will think out the implications of that statement you will see what was the nature of D.H.L.'s bondage; he was the measure of his own universe; his own god—and also his own hell. He deliberately (or perhaps he couldn't help it)—anyhow, he regarded himself as exempt from the laws that hold mankind together (I am not referring to conventional morality) and when a human being does that, he is of necessity cut off from contact with his fellows. It seemed to me that D.H.L.'s great powers—far from exempting him from responsibility, conferred upon him a much greater and higher order of responsibility. I could only think that time would prove. At the end of that same walk, as we stood within a stone's throw of the house where his mother lay dead, he said to me:

"You know J, I've always loved mother."

"I know you have", I replied.

"I don't mean that", he answered. "I've loved her—like a lover—that's why I could never love you".

Then he handed me the three poems he had written since she had died. I think this partly explains why he had placed himself beyond ordinary human sanctions. He was, as it were, driven out of the land of the living into a fearful wilderness of egoism. It explains, too, why, as you remark in your book, he looked in woman only for the animal—female—qualities. It made his dilemma a cruel one, because it compelled him to deny what was best in himself. Consequently his prison was also a terrible battleground where his two selves were constantly fighting each other.

I'll tell you one other incident. On the day when he first met Mrs. Weekly at lunch, he came to tea at the Farm here; and after tea, in the parlour, he said to me in accents of despair:

"When we are not together, since we have been parted, I'm not the same man. I don't think the same, feel the same; I can't write poetry". There was his dilemma; one D.H.L. saw one thing with intense clarity; the other went the way of a doomed man. As he said so often; he couldn't help it. But what a price he paid.

I don't propose to write a book about him, and yet I know an aspect of his life that no one else has ever known or can possibly know. So I hope to leave a simple historical record of all I know about him, so that if at some future time some biographer with no pre-conceived theories about him, but a genuine desire to find out what manner of man he was, and what forces went to his making, should arise, my record will exist as one of the "sources". That, I feel, I owe to D.H.L. and to what he stood for. But I loathe exhibitionism, so that only a later generation will read my record, if indeed it is ever read.

Strangely enough, the record will extend just beyond his death, and perhaps you will be interested to hear that part. As I have said, the fact of D.H.L.'s suffering is the dominant fact in his life for me, and it was only after the publication of "The Plumed Serpent" that I realized he was a tortured spirit. As you know, I returned his last letter in 1913, and since then no word ever passed between us, and I never heard news of him; his name was never mentioned to me. I did not know he was ill; the letter he sent to David was never shown to me until weeks after his death, so that whatever knowledge I had of him came through other channels than those of ordinary communication. For some eighteen months or so before his death I felt acutely drawn to him at times, and wondered intensely how some kind of communication that seemed so urgently needed, was to be established. It seemed to be not just a matter of writing a letter—something else, something different was needed. The feeling that some drawing together was imminent scarcely ever left me. Once quite suddenly, as though he had spoken, the words came into my mind—"We are still on the same planet." There were other things too of a like nature. Please remember I had no idea D.H.L. was ill. On the morning of the day he died, he suddenly said to me, as distinctly as if he had been here in the room with me: "Can you remember only the pain and none of the joy?" And his voice was so full of reproach that I made haste to assure him that I *did* remember the joy. Then later on in a strange confused way he said—"What has it all been about?"

The next morning I was busy with my housework when suddenly the room was filled with his presence and for a moment I saw him just as I had known him in early days, with the little cap on the back of his head. That momentary presence was so full of joy that I simply concluded it was an ——(?) of a real meeting in the near future. I remember saying to myself, "Now I *know* we're going to meet."

The following day his death was announced in the paper, and was a terrible shock to me. I give you this for what it is worth . . . smile it away, if you will, it doesn't matter; the experience was just as real as the fact that I am now holding a pen. I don't think it was self-suggestion, because I didn't know he was ill; I was full of anxiety on his behalf, but I judged his trouble to be of the soul.

I am sure that he broke through his prison before the end, and died a free spirit, though he had lived in bondage. I think his last poems show that he found the way to freedom and wholeness, so that he achieved a triumph, but not the kind that he used to write about so much. It had been my conviction all along that he would find out what the trouble really was, and I had almost dared to believe that having achieved the inner unity, without which he spent himself in vain, he would be strong enough to reshape his life on positive values; but it was not to be. By the time he understood his malady he had spent his vital force. I was expecting too much from one earthly span; the suffering of self-division of the utmost limit was a life-time's work, maybe. The story of the unification lies in the future.

So you see this is how D.H.L. appears to me, and his long arguments about aristocrats and democrats and the rest are only the dusty miles he covered in his pilgrimage. The only interest they have for me is the internal evidence they bear as to the state of his soul. Apart from that they are utterly unreal. There is no such thing as a division of people into aristocrats and democrats; it is the same with human beings as with the wheat among which the enemy had sown tares. "Let both grow together till harvest." The only definition of democracy that appeals to me is this: "Democracy is that arrangement of society in which every individual has an opportunity of becoming an aristocrat." . . . "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Again, is that Golden Age of which D.H.L. dreamed in some

remote past any further back than his own boyhood and youth? It is a great error to suppose that his early life was unhappy. In our home his name was a synonym for joy—radiant joy in simply being alive. He communicated that joy to all of us, and made us even happy with one another while he was there; no small achievement in a family like ours! No, D.H.L.'s Golden Age was the time up to nineteen or so, before that fatal self-division began to manifest itself. What was it Keats said about a great man's life being an allegory, and his works the comments upon it? Something of that applies to D.H.L. You see that in essentials my feeling for him has not changed in spite of other deep affection. What he said about the indestructibility of love is quite true, on a particular plane.

I hope this long letter will not bore you. I haven't said much about your book, but I think you will understand my attitude.

You may like to read Carter's book. I prize it for the little biographical touches . . . D.H.L. sitting on his heels feeding the fire with sticks—how clearly I see him, and his sombre face. Keep it as long as you like, but sometime I'd like to see it again. My very best wishes for the success of your book.

POEM

W. P. Yeates

*The waterfall that does not believe in gravity
Hangs like a streamer from the hill,
White and still.*

*The tree that does not believe in growth
Pushes the earth a summer from the sky
For room to die.*

*The bird that does not believe in flight
Roosts like a fungus when the leaves are flown,
Feather and bone.*

*The man that does not believe in life
Threatens existence with destruction
For a distraction.
The world that does not believe in revolution
Falls headlong back into the sun
Where it began.*

Dorian Cooke

A SOLDIER, DYING OF WOUNDS, SPEAKS
TO ME ON MAY 9TH, 1945

*You will remain. Do not hope much
From the husks of heavy archives;
Their tongues bark dusty lies that touch
Your footway. The enemy has lives
Still and a long language. You will clutch
Many times there, and you will flicker
Like a lamp in the wind. Your mark
Is known, for it does not beat quicker
Than an old cradle. Search the dark
For signs, and the far light
For footprints from the night.
Do not dream much in the waiting years,
Nor guess an incredible way
Up mountain clouds or down damp stairs
Through the illiterate dark. Each day
The ambush is armed against your heirs,
Levies are laid on living and dying.
I am among those who have died;
All our deaths, like a hurt child crying,
Are only a by-work. The wind-tide,
Water-call, fall of rain,
Are for those who remain.*

Dal Stivens

A LOVE STORY

OUR NEIGHBOUR, OLD DRYBLOWER TAYLOR, WAS remarkable for four things:

Although he was the richest man in the district, he was also the meanest and lived in a hollow log.

He had a stud ram for which he had paid £1,000.

He owned a platypus rug worth (it was said) over £500.

He had an odd way of rounding up his horses.

What a man!

Where shall I begin? Most people ask about the log he lived in. It mightn't be your idea of a Darling Point mansion but it served Dryblower well enough. It was a big dead hollow gum and it kept the rain off and the winds away. Dryblower was a little dried-up shrimp of a man so he wasn't cramped for room. If you only look at it that way, a man's needs are simple enough.

As for the ram, it looked just like any other ram to me but Dryblower reckoned it was worth that much to him for his ewes, and it won all the prizes each year at the Show.

The platypus rug he had from an Indian hawker who got into his debt during the big drought. What a man when everyone else was getting into debt with the hawkers and the stores and anyone who would give us credit!

Mean! He went to bed before sundown so he would not have to burn a candle.

But he had two extravagances. None of us is consistent. He liked his mug even if he drank on his own. And he had a most expensive way of rounding up his horses. If you could run your hand along their rumps you would find out for yourself without me telling you. You would find little lumps under the hide. Gunshot.

Whoa! he'd yell to them and if they didn't stop and wheel back into the yard he'd let fly with the double-barrelled. "Run away,

would you!" he'd yell as soon as he got in the paddock, and up with the gun. What a life he led those bags of bones. They'd throw up their heads and gallop into the yard, I tell you, when Dryblower took a pot at them.

You can imagine the shock when Dryblower got married.

We wouldn't believe it at first, but it was right. He got pneumonia and a nurse at the hospital snared him. What a marriage for you!

I tell you, we waited for things to happen after that. We didn't think it could happen but that woman soon parted him from his money and his log. First it was a new home, brick too, with hot water and refrigeration. Twenty rooms and a grand piano. And a motor car. And a new suit of clothes for Dryblower and a shave.

"Dang it all," he said, tugging at the ends of his sandy mo, "I look like a city slicker. Dang it all, woman, I look just like the bank manager."

Do you think that woman listened? Not her. She started reforming Dryblower and quite a job she made of it. You never saw such a ruin of a man in so short a time. He was frightened to spit and that was the truth of it.

"Dang it all, Herb," he says to me, looking up to the house to see if she were watching and then hawking happily, "dang it all, Herb, a bloke can't even spit. Turnin' me into a bloody toff, she is."

What next must she do but get a butler who had been at Government House. The ways that woman found to spend money! Did Dryblower try to put up a fight? He was like a hen when you draw a chalk line in front of her nose. There was only hot air in his protests. Take my word for it: he was in love with her.

What do you think happened next? Dryblower is back living in the hollow log. I went over to see him and there sure enough I found him.

This time though there was a telephone in the log. That woman never missed a trick—all done so the butler who was called Clarence could ring Dryblower every time he wanted Dryblower to sign a cheque.

What a thing to do to a man. to kick him out of the house because she was jealous of the attention Dryblower paid to his prize ram. And this just the time when the flies were bad.

The strange way Dryblower acted that day! Sneaking across the

creek with me at his heels, ducking behind trees and shushing me every time I tried to ask what was in the wind.

Getting near the kitchen he sniffs like a greyhound starting up a rabbit, smacks his lips, and darts into the kitchen.

In a minute he crayfishes out with a hot roast in a dish and bolts back to the log with me following.

What a way to have to live!

"Dang it all, Herb," he says later, when we've put the roast away, "when I was courtin my wife she said she was twenty. The day we got spliced she said she was thirty. Last week she said she was forty. And dang it all, Herb, if I don't think she's fifty."

Did it matter to him? The things men will do when they are in love. Dryblower got on the shicker and shot the ram to prove to her that the ram didn't matter in his life.

When he sobered up he felt different. What a to-do there was then! Dryblower and that woman both had a howl over the ram and then he wrapped the ram in the platypus rug and buried him.

What a man!

THE HELLFIRE JACK

WE WERE WORKING SHORTHANDED AND ABOUT TO begin shearing when a leathery-looking cove with a swag and a fierce-looking kelpie bitch turned up looking for a job. The boss got all over him and started pitching a tale about how good he was to work for, but all the bloke said was, "When do I start?"

"Well, there's some wood that wants cutting, but I was thinking of——" says the boss, and before he had finished the leathery cove had whipped off his coat and was running to the woodheap. He picked up the axe on the run and the chips started flying. The heap of logs was fifteen feet high, and the chips were eight inches by six, and in next to no time the heap was all chopped up and the bloke came running back and stood in front of the boss.

"Got another job?" he asked.

"Well," said the boss, "there's a dam down there that wants cleaning out, but I was thinking of——"

Before the boss had finished the bloke was beating it in a cloud of dust down to the wrong dam, and the boss had to yell at him and set him right.

The leathery cove rounded up the horses on the run and in next to no time he had flung the harness on their backs and had hitched forty horses on to three scoops and was scooping great hunks out of the dam. Before you could say Jack Robinson the job was done and the bloke came back at the double and stood in front of the boss again and said:

"Got another job?"

"There are a few lambs that want marking, but I was thinking of——" said the boss, and before he could finish the bloke was running to the paddock and pulling out his Jno. Baker knife. He jumped the fence and before his legs had hit the ground he had grabbed a lamb by the leg and set to work.

The boss started walking over to the bloke and five minutes later, when he got up with him, he said, "Don't you want to have them rounded up?"

But the bloke only muttered something about not liking to waste time, and before you could think of your name he had marked six hundred lambs and had run up to the boss and said, "Got another job?"

"Well," said the boss, "I tried to tell you before, but I was thinking of starting shearing."

But before the words were out of his mouth the bloke had snatched a pair of shears out of his swag and was off in a cloud of dust. Before you could blink he was nearly out of sight in the big paddock. I tell you without a word of a lie that that paddock was so big you would need twenty fresh horses to gallop round it in a day and it had more sheep than you would see people on Easter Monday at the Royal Show in Sydney.

The leathery cove gathered the sheep in at the double and before long there was a pile of wool as high as a silo. The shears ran hot and the bloke had to keep running to the dam to dip them in the water and a cloud of dust and steam spread out over the paddock. The pile of wool got higher and higher until it was soon as high as the top of the Harbour Bridge and the dam dried up, what from the sizzling hot shears, but the bloke kept on clipping away.

In next to no time the paddock was full of sheep running around with the short wool smoking on their backs and wondering what the hell had happened to them and the mountain of wool got twice as high as the Harbour Bridge and so wide and long you would have had to saddle a horse to travel right round it.

The bloke was setting off for the second paddock when the boss grabbed him.

"Don't you think you've done enough?" says the boss. "You ought to call it a day."

Before the boss had got the words out of his mouth the bloke was pulling on his coat and was off up to the house and the boss yelled to ask him what he was doing, but the bloke kept on going and yelled back over his shoulder:

"Give me my cheque. I ain't working for any boss who is always interfering.

He ran up to the house and grabbed his swag and called his dog. The boss tried to argue but the bloke wouldn't listen and danced from one foot to another, so the boss said:

"I ain't one to stint. It was two hours' work, but call it half a day."

He held out half a note and the bloke snatched it on the run, and before long all we had to remind us of the leathery bloke was a cloud of dust settling on the road, a heap of wool as high as a dust storm, the dried-up dam, and the bleating of the sheep who didn't settle down to what had happened for three days.

We had reckoned on the shearing not cutting out for six weeks, but it was only a week after that that the boss handed us our cheques. We went to ten shearing sheds looking for work and everywhere it was the same where this Hellfire Jack had been with heaps of wool as big as clouds and sheep still getting their breath back, and if ever you are about to begin a job and you hear there's a leathery cove around with a fierce looking kelpie bitch, don't bother to start, jump the rattler and put three States behind you and then you might be right.

Dan Davin

A RETURN

OF COURSE I DIDN'T SHOW IT BUT IT WAS ALL A BIT of a shock to me. I'd heard bits and scraps of news from time to time while I was away—that Martin's old man had died the year I left, that Martin had come back and had married the O'Halloran girl whose father owned the stud farm up at Morton Mains. But none of it meant much, what with Munich and a war brewing and then the war itself. It didn't prepare me, anyhow, for a new house in what used to be the front paddock, with an electric stove and a washing-machine and all sorts of things Martin's old man would have sweat blood to see.

So I was rather relieved when I got outside with Martin by himself. Though for a start neither of us had much to say; picking up the threads, I suppose.

It was seeing old Glen that gave me the first link; apart from Martin himself, of course.

"Surely it's old Glen," I said, as I bent down to pat him. "Do you remember me, Glen, old boy?" But he didn't know me. It was too long.

"That's him all right," Martin said. "Nearly blind now, poor old chap, aren't you, Glen? I'll let him off the chain and he can come with us."

We walked on down the drive and Glen came along behind us, close at Martin's heels. Don, the new dog, a smart black and tan collie, heard us and came frisking out from behind the woodheap.

"Now there's a dog for you," Martin said. "He knows more about sheep than I do myself." And he began to tell me stories of Don's brains, much the same stories that used to be told about Glen, except that in the old days it was always cows, not sheep, that gave a dog on this farm a chance to show his intelligence.

But I was only half-listening. My mind was on the past and I

seemed to be seeing things double, as they were now and as they once had been. This drive under our feet still ran down to the old house I could see ahead of us, crouched among its trees the way it used to be, but empty now. To that house, built with his own hands, and along this drive old Martin must have come when he first brought his wife there in the years before I, her sister's son, was born. And along it, after she had had young Martin, the last of her sons, the old man had driven her in his trap that cold November morning when he took her to the dentist in town, twelve miles away. They had come back the same night, she with all her teeth out and muffled—but not enough—against the bitter wind. Her last journey till the one not long after when they took her to the cemetery, dead through the chill she caught.

And in the years that followed, as one child after another grew old enough to rebel, each of them had come along this drive in the night, just before daybreak, making his way to the gate, the main road and freedom. At the last the old man himself had come along it to join his wife, worn out by work and his own harshness to himself. Only Martin had come back, alone of all that family. And now the old house was empty, the drive was a path that led only to the past. Grass grew between the wheel ruts.

"What's happened to the gorse hedge that used to be here?" I asked. For the wind came straight across the paddocks, ruffling the backs of the ewes and cutting at us through the bare, wire fence.

"Had it all yanked out," Martin said. "I got the tractor on to it. You can't beat a good wire fence. Tight wire and sound totara straining posts and you're jake for ten years."

I looked at the hedge that wasn't there. The thrushes used to fly out of it bursting with alarm as the ferret threaded his way in and out among the dry, twisted roots before vanishing down another burrow. In spring the whole hedge was saddled in gold.

"That fixed the rabbits, too," he said. "Not one on the whole place now. No, I'm well rid of the hedges." He changed his voice suddenly. "Get along with ye now, what way is that to cut a hedge? It's as crooked as a dog's hind leg. Give me that slasher."

He had his father to a T. I gave a jump when he said it. For I'd had the lash of the old man's tongue myself in my time.

"Remember?" he said. "And he wouldn't be satisfied, either, till you could have run a spirit-level along it. By God, what a tiger he was for work, the old tyrant."

"Well, I've changed all that," he went on. "No hedges, and no cows either. Sheep, that's the thing. No more slavery for me. Look at that mob of sheep now out there, worth four guineas a crack, every blasted one of them, not counting the lambs they'll have."

I looked at the sheep, bunched out in the paddock, heads down and backs to the wind, cropping.

"Here, Don," he said to the dog. "Way back."

Don ran out towards the sheep and, answering immediately to every whistled command, shuffled them about for me to get a good look at them.

"Hullo," Martin said. "What's the matter with that one?"

We got through the taut wire and went over. The ewe didn't move as we came up. There were two lambs beside her.

"She's had it, poor bitch," he said. "Still, we'll rear the lambs all right. We'll pick them up on the way back."

Out on the drive old Glen, who hadn't followed us into the paddock, fell in behind again.

"I suppose I ought to shoot him," Martin said. "But he was a good dog in his day. He's never been the same since I got rid of the cows. Once a cattledog always a cattledog. Though he'd be too old for that now, anyway."

I said nothing. The Glen I remembered was a young dog, out in the morning chivvying the cows in for the milking, the dew flying up at his heels.

We were coming into the backyard of the old house now. The kitchen garden on the right was wild. There was no movement in the macrocarpa hedges that once bustled with hens. No trail of geese came marching in convoy from under the five-barred gate. The cartsheds seemed to have staggered, got smaller. What had been the stand for the milk-cans was a crumpled heap of boards with docks growing round. The old spring-cart we used to drive in with the milk to the factory had fallen on its knees.

"We'd better take a look at the old house," Martin said, "before it gets dark enough for ghosts."

He fished out the key from under the tankstand, the old hiding-place. The door gripped a bit on the floor but gave to a shove. We went in, Glen following.

We wandered from room to room, our feet echoing. And in all the rooms it seemed as if the old man's presence dominated still.

In the kitchen where the family used to eat his fearful silence still ruled over the absent table. In the sitting-room the emptiness, the bare boards, were less real to me than that clear picture from the past where he sat with his legs stretched before the log fire, boots still on, the boys scarcely daring to whisper over their homework and no other sound but the occasional knock of a pot out in the scullery where the girls would be washing up.

But most of all you felt him still in that room where Martin and all the others had been begotten and born, where their mother had died, where the old man himself had died, reconciled to no-one and alone.

Something about the timid way we peeped into it as if we half-expected him to stare up at us with his fierce, green eyes roused Martin to the defiance which was the mainspring of his life.

"And what brings ye in here peeking?" he suddenly shouted. "Can't ye find anything better to do than hang round here waiting to see when your father will die? Aren't there cows to be milked, and pigs to be fed? Is there no ploughing that you can be idling away the good days that God made for the land? Get away with ye now to your work before I get myself up from this bed and show ye who's the master here."

Glen looked up at Martin uneasily and went skulking down the passage to the back door.

"You were always a devil for the mimicking, Martin," I said. He grinned. "Wait and I'll give you another one."

He crossed the passage to the room where old Paddy used to sleep, his father's only friend. We used to hide under the bed in there and frighten him, pretending to be ghosts.

There was silence for a minute and then I heard old Paddy's high-pitched brogue.

"'Tis the fairies, Martin, 'tis the fairies that are after the living soul of me," the voice shrieked and Martin came rushing out as if he were indeed Paddy and were fleeing from all the ghosts of Ireland.

I followed him down the passage and through the thickening memories.

At the next door on the left a new voice awaited me. It was Norah this time and how well I recognized that passionate storming of God that you might have heard any night and any time of the night in the years when this house lived so long ago.

"Oh God in Heaven," the voice was surging, "have mercy on us all, have mercy on us all, all of us, oh God, except those wicked devils, my own flesh and blood, that never leave off tormenting me with their teasing and talking and tattling, and you, oh Holy Mother, do you save me from that lost soul, O'Connor, who's forever watching me at the dances and in the very church itself in the middle of Holy Mass is moving his terrible eyes at me."

But another voice took its turn now, the voice of Rose, the bold and domineering, daughter of her father, a strong voice full of jeers.

"For Heaven's sake, Norah, won't you be quiet now and leave us in peace with your O'Connor. It's ashamed you should be howling and praying at all hours and all over a man that's nothing but a red-haired gorilla when all's said and done and would never have looked at you twice if you hadn't put the idea into his head yourself by asking him to dance in the Ladies' Excuse Me, if it's in anybody's head but your own, that is, and him a married man and all."

There was an even wilder shriek from Norah at this and as the door flung open it was all I could do to believe that it was not Norah herself I saw holding it closed and shouting back through it.

"Not a minute longer will I stay in this wicked house, I swear to God I won't. I'll go to him now with all I have which is myself and tell him I've been driven out of my own house by my own sister. I'll disgrace the lot of you, that's what I'll do, but at least I won't have to stay on here among a lot of scheming, jealous devils that have the making of nothing in them but drunkards and old maids. So put that in your pipe and smoke it."

All the men were out of the house that night at the lambing, I remembered. She had gone, and I wondered that the memory of that alone and what had happened to her afterwards was not enough to quieten Martin. But he was in the grip of his art now and perhaps, too, there was something in all this that helped him shake off the past that had driven him to the new house and new ways, bold man that he was ever to have come back to that place so full of terrible memories.

"Look," he was saying now, having drawn me into the back bedroom where he and his two brothers, Neil and Con, used to sleep, after Ned had gone off to his death in the first war, and before Neil cursed his father and went off to Australia and Con

shot himself in the back stables. "Look," he said, "there's the window we used to climb in at after the dances long ago or after all night round a keg or a bottle of Hokonui whisky, and sometimes we'd hardly be under the blankets before he'd come roaring in with that whip of his."

He began to shout in his father's voice again.

"Up with ye, up with ye, ye lazy omadhauns. Isn't it nearly daylight already and the cows out there with their bags bursting and devil the one of you caring a tinker's dam but lying there like gentlemen pensioners. Oh, it's a fine parcel of useless brummocks and Lady Janes I'm rearing and no mistake. Out of bed with you now before I tear the blankets off you and lay this whip across your bare backsides.

Martin leaned against the wall and looked round the empty room, bemused.

"Ah, poor Con," he said. "Will I ever forget that night? It was after the milking and I had just put the cows out and come up with the buckets from feeding the calves when I heard the clamour of it. 'And what brings you home from the seminary, my lad?' the old devil was saying when I got in. And there was poor Con, still in his black suit the way he'd walked up from the station, leaning back there in the corner by the window. 'I've decided I haven't got a vocation,' he said, as quietly as I'm speaking to you now. And the old man came up on him, and little fellow though he was, it was frightening, I tell you, because of all that devil was in him."

"'So that's it,' he says at last, quietly this time. And then he suddenly lets out a bellow. 'I'll give you vocation,' he says and hits Con across the face with his open hand. Well, you know how I liked Con, I wasn't going to take that. And poor Con was the last man in the world to stick up for himself. So I caught the old man by the shoulder. And what does he do then but take a crack at me, if you please. So I hit him. And hit him hard. That was the night Con shot himself. And I lit out for the North that same night, not knowing."

"Aye," he went on. "And Rose wasn't long after me and none of us have heard so much as a whisper of her from that day to this, whatever happened to her. Aye, there was a devil in that man, even though he'd whip you for not knowing your prayers. Comfort was a sin for him and he died as hard as he lived. Well,

I hope he has a better time in hell than he gave us. And yet, you know, when I look back on it all I feel sorry for him. God only knows what was the matter with him, but I think he was fond of us in his own queer way."

He led the way towards the back door.

"Yes," he said, looking back into the dark kitchen from the failing light outside. "He was a queer old fellow. But he was a hard worker and we were a wild lot. It was a good farm he left behind him at any rate. And he made it out of nothing. Perhaps if she had lived things would have been different. It might have been the devil in himself that he was trying to whip out of our backsides."

When we got through the fence to pick up the lambs he bounced his hand on the wire. It didn't satisfy him and he took hold of the straining stick to give it a couple more twists. "I'm glad I got rid of the hedges," he said. "A man's got to keep up with the times."

And as, each of us with a lamb under his arm, we walked up the drive again towards the roughcast house where the electric light was already shining and where hot water and a meal and a wife were waiting, I saw that it was not only Glen and I whom the times had left behind, not only us for whom this new, efficient factory, its wire fences and its sheep, were not quite real, not only us for whom youth meant the old place behind us where there used to be room for gorse and rabbits and ghosts and where life had toiled and twisted round its own frustrations, a coil of passionate wills driven not by comfort but by love and appetites and dreams.

Nagy Istvan

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WHILE I WAS TIDYING UP MY BOOKS, I CAME ACROSS a two-sheet booklet. The title was striking: *Földi János Swallowed Up by the Town*. I stared at the yellowish pages. It had been published in 1932, by the author. Who do you think was the author? Myself. I entered the literary field with that short story and the long-winded title. Those 32 pages had been set and printed at Cluj at the "Victoria," a small printing-shop. To make me smart for the rest of my life, the printers mixed up pages 8 and 9, and it came out in that way. I was furious but I didn't dare ask to have it re-printed. The blame would have fallen on the machine-minder who smoked a pipe. I didn't feel like making him do it all over again and pay the losses incurred through his mistake.

I was also afraid lest in his anger he should make fun of me who in spite of my four and a half forms of elementary school and my filthy trousers had taken to writing novels. The case-men corrected my spelling mistakes, and it seemed to me that when they gave me some advice, they were laughing at me. I felt their mockery when they asked me, on printing the title, whether they should add "Copyright . . ." I was very annoyed and gesticulated. No. It would have meant a lack of modesty on my part. Besides, who on earth could have wanted to encroach upon my rights and all the more so with my first book!

"Well, well, for a first work it isn't too bad," said the printer, patting me on the back and swinging his leg. "You just wait and see: in a month's time, some fine gentleman will be looking you up."

I didn't even answer. *Földi János* was published without the "copyright" clause. The book was distributed by the members of the Union and by those of the "Worker's Aid." It did not even occur to me to approach the book-sellers. They would, certainly,

never display my book among those of university professors, I said to myself, when the fidgeting printer spoke again about the gentlemen who would soon be keen on meeting me.

But, miracle of miracles, five weeks after the book had come out, a quite high-placed man expressed a wish to make my acquaintance. He must have taken me for a very important person indeed, for he tried to find me through the police. Indeed, he must have been very anxious to have me introduced, for the policeman who found me nestled in a heap of wood-wool, solemnly informed me that he would take me at once to the gentleman who was so interested in me. Thinking, however, that it wasn't quite fitting to walk either beside or in front of a writer, he showed me the way to the public prosecutor's office, walking behind, with a modesty characteristic of any well-bred policeman.

When I arrived before the public prosecutor of the 3rd section, he was just introducing himself to a Catholic priest, also the author of a book. The priest was replying to his questions, seated in a velvet armchair. After his departure, the public prosecutor, as if he hadn't noticed the chair was vacant, let me shift my author's centre of gravity from one leg to the other.

He became most intensely interested in the person of Földi János. Where did he live, why had I written his history, who had asked me to write it, and more especially who was the real author hiding under my name? He simply couldn't believe that an ignorant carpenter's apprentice had been able to make up the character of Földi János Swallowed Up by the Town.

I got into a cold sweat. It served me right; why hadn't I listened to the fidgeting printer? I ought to have allowed them to print "Copyright." How the devil could I find, at a minute's notice, a lawful domicile for Földi János? Could I explain that he had lived in my mind before I moved him to his eternal home, in literature? Or, could I mention that I had picked up the core of the story from tales told by the young peasant-workers who were members of the organization? That wouldn't be any good either, because the public prosecutor would then want to know my comrades. He might even be capable of summoning them too. Murdering the Rumanian language, I managed with much difficulty to state: "Honestly, that Uncle János is mine alone. Why did I write about him? Why does a writer write? Sometimes for money, sometimes

for fame . . . I had been unemployed all along the winter and I had always hated the lying novels I tried to kill the time with. That made me think, then, that I ought to try and write a true story, a good one."

"What?" burst out the magistrate, waving the booklet before my eyes. "You call this a fine true story about how the cows are taken away from the peasants for unpaid taxes? And why just the Hungarian people's cows? Aren't the Rumanian people's cows also taken away if they fail to pay their taxes in time?"

I admitted, humbly, that the public prosecutor was right and that in Transylvania everybody met with the same fate, and I promised him that as soon as I got a chance I would write another story stating that the Rumanian people's cows also were taken away.

That was too much for the public prosecutor. He pounded with the blotting-pad on the table, shouting that he would stop me instigating people because, undoubtedly, it was a case of communist instigation. Isolated cases must not be generalized.

I stared in amazement at his thin face. This man probably had a very short memory. At that time, when the economic crisis was at its height, the law-courts were crammed with peasants charged with attacking the tax collectors with axes and yoke-bolts. The prisons were full of trespassers found guilty of cutting wood in the forests of this very public prosecutor. My Földi János was one of those poor peasants. The only difference between him and the other people who had got into trouble was the fact that he did not want to have anything to do with his son, a worker in the town who, being a member of a labour movement, had been arrested and imprisoned. A year later, however, the old man had also been swallowed up by the town-prison for attacking the bailiffs.

It so happened that he was put into a cell on the door of which his son had carved his own name.

These were the facts, but I didn't care to argue with the magistrate any longer. "Charge me before the court!" I said to him. "If my book constitutes a crime, I'll be responsible for it. To write it made me very happy."

"Happy! Just wait a minute." And he beckoned to the policeman who was still standing stiffly behind me. "Bring in those women just to show this impertinent fellow what has come out of his happiness."

I soon realized the price I had to pay for the joys of art! Two worn out peasant-women and a factory-workwoman were brought in.

All three women were broken down and haggard. Terrified, they stared at me with big timid eyes.

"Look at them," said the magistrate. "You have ruined these unfortunate creatures with your Földi János!"

I stood stonestill. Never in my life had I set eyes on those peasants. I vaguely remembered the factory-woman. Perhaps I had met her at the meetings of the "Workers' Aid Association." I learned that her name was Torockay. She admitted that she got twenty copies of my book from the factory committee. She had taken them on her first free Sunday to her village. As she was related to half the village, she and the two women went round to all her relatives to sell the books.

"And who has asked you to hawk these books?" shouted the magistrate at Torockay.

"I wasn't hawking, my relatives had kept on asking me to bring them something to read."

"But why did you just pick out that book?"

"Because it was the only one I had," said the woman with the freckles, shrugging her shoulders. "Besides, that book was full of good advice."

At that the magistrate got into a furious temper which had no connection with legal procedure.

He gave it to the women hot and strong. What business of theirs was it if Földi János had been Swallowed Up by the Town or not? If they wanted good books and had nothing better to do, why didn't they read the Bible . . . I too got my share: my business was to stick to carpentry and stop mingling like a sexton with learned men. In the writing way I would never amount to anything. At the best, I would provoke trouble the way I had. Now he would draw up the papers and the Court would see everybody got his due. Finally, he sent us off with a fatherly "clear out."

It was only when we got down to the street that I learned what those women had been through. Having recovered from their fright, they told me all about their sad experience. They had been brought from beyond Turda and taken handcuffed from one gendarmerie-post to another, tied to each other by chains. That calvary had lasted for four days until they reached the Cluj Law-

Court. Both peasants complained that it was I who had got them into this trouble. The factory-woman felt sure that she would be kicked out of the factory since they wouldn't have anything to do with a person who had a stain on her character. She also said she had lost a week's wages and, if she was to be sentenced, what would happen to her two little children?

I grew very uneasy.

If they charged me and condemned me, I'd have to acquiesce, after having had the pleasure of telling the truth.

But should I be able to go on with my writing if all my writing did was to get my readers into trouble? And those readers, mind, the workers whom I had wanted to please by depicting their life!

I had no time to think about those troubles any longer. The three women's faces had diverted my attention. I ought to have compensated the factory-woman for her lost wages. I ought to have had the two peasant-women sent home by train to stop their walking home, poor things! Yes, but with what money? With all I had got from the sale of my books, plus half a week's wage, I had just managed to pay the printers. I fumbled in the worn-out pocket of my working suit as if I didn't know beforehand what it contained: a tape-measure and a pencil. I was about to ask the women to come with me; I intended to sell my holiday clothes to some old clothes dealer and to hand them the money. That was all I could do. The factory-woman guessed what was worrying me, and surmising how rich a writer I was, suggested I should give her a note to the factory committee. That committee had sold to the workers about 150 copies of my book and not paid off the money so far.

I guessed all the rest. I took the women's small rough hands in mine and asked them to forgive me. The peasant-women said nothing. The factory-woman, however, answered me by a strong hand-shake. On parting, she called out after me, smiling:

"You must write another good one!"

I understood what she meant, and I cheerfully made for the work-shop. The "Victoria Printing Press" was on my way. I went down to the basement to tell that funny prophet the important gentleman whom I had met and what kind of literary government-protection was in store for me.

To my amazement, my friend, the printer, took my hand and showered congratulations on me. He envied me extremely, and

said that it was a good omen, all I had to do was to wait until the news of my literary law-suit spread about and then my name would be on everybody's lips, and I'd get enough bay-leaves to hand them down to my descendants for their potato broth. On the other hand, the owner of the printing-shop was afraid that he himself might get into trouble. Half jokingly, half seriously, he threatened to do me in if he was sued. He added that he would never in his life again print a work by such a writer.

"Don't worry!" the prophet shouted laughing after me, "Be quick and write something good for us to print, and this time with Copyright."

Indeed, during all the following weeks I didn't think of anything else. What could I write about? It would have to be something good to get nobody into trouble, and to bring me enough to pay the lawyers and to compensate the families of my women readers if they were locked up on my account.

I was bound to write also because the members of the trade-unions had told me:

"You are not going to get frightened so easily, are you?"

But I couldn't get on. The inspiration that had given birth to Földi János and a whole set of other people would never fill my soul again. Whenever I felt inspired the picture of the three scared women flashed into my mind. They tugged at my arms and entreated me to content myself with Földi János. They had tried their luck with him. Why should I get them into trouble again? They couldn't resist books full of good examples and who knows what else might happen to them as a result?

I couldn't put two words together all along the summer. Maybe I would never have got any further if Földi János had kept quiet, but he wouldn't. He had crossed Transylvania, got to Bucharest, spreading the news everywhere. He increased my fame within the workers' circles as well as my status as a trade-unionist; he made me chairman of the "Workers' Aid Association," a branch of which existed in Timisoara. That branch had about 500 copies of my book in stock. The leaders thought that if I went there and lectured as a writer about "Mutual Aid," they might collect some money. Instead of buying a ticket each person would buy a copy of the book and in addition contribute voluntarily a sum for the children's canteen of the "Workers' Aid." I received a formal invitation. They asked for my help since the subscriptions were

low and the number of the children of the unemployed rather large. A lecture by a writer might also help to rouse the lower middle-classes, who were actually with the workers but were afraid. I might also tell them how we had succeeded in setting up at Cluj two day-nurseries, two free infirmaries and a canteen for strikers and for the workers carrying on the good fight.

The Timisoara people wanted to know how we managed to forestall the Secret Police obliterating us. Apart from the lecture I was supposed to give them some information in that respect.

Being one of the organizing members of the "Workers' Aid Association" I gladly accepted that responsibility. As a writer, however, I wasn't quite so pleased. I considered that they expected too much from me and I didn't wish to disappoint them. Who knows whether I would ever manage to write another book in my life? I was also disturbed by the invitation as the Timisoara Secret Police didn't bother very much about the legal status of the "Workers' Aid" or its legal activity. Every week they arrested new leading members, beat them black and blue to take the zeal for "mutual aid" out of them. Such aid was the object stated in the articles of association. Prefect Grita himself had solemnly promised the Timisoara manufacturers that so long as he was in charge of the county, the workers would not dare open their mouth. Remiantu, chief of the Secret Police, had sworn that he would tame the workers' leaders with their intolerable goings-on. That year they had fully tamed Encel Mor and released him only in his coffin. It was to this lion's den I had been summoned. "My prestige as a writer" was to make Mr. Remiantu more understanding. My presence was to encourage the better-off petty middle-class and to dispel the indifference of the workers for the "Workers' Aid." But most important of all was the hope that with my help a fund for the children of the unemployed would be set up. In short, I had to go, in spite of my misgivings. The chief editor of the *Timisoara Evening Journal* at that time wrote an article on my expected visit. I suppose he had promised his readers a series "featuring prominent writers."

They were looking forward to that "workman-writer," and I was feverishly preparing. I thought it would be better if I looked like a superior workman so as to make a strong impression on the lower middle-class and the Secret Police. Of course, there are all sorts of workers. There are even some who wear a bowler hat,

patent leather shoes, and have at least five suits hanging in their wardrobes. I only had one worn-out grey suit. If Mr. Remiantu saw me he would immediately assess my get-up as a subversive action.

That autumn a fickle October weather had set in and I hadn't even got an overcoat. So I asked Jakov Gyurka to lend me his trench-coat, assuring that young unemployed metallurgical worker he would get it back in three days' time. I wouldn't be long; I would just go straight there and back. I had reassured my wife in the same way, but I bid a longer farewell to my two years old baby. I bore clearly in my mind a picture of him with his plump little cheeks and his sweet chatter. I couldn't take his photo along as I had never had one.

I said to my wife: "Henceforth, we'll take Karcsi every six months to the photographer to know later on what he looked like as a kid." This was the only way I could think of to make my wife understand that if I weren't able to come back home for years she should show me afterwards the child's photos taken from time to time. On leaving I also borrowed a shabby document-wallet and a copy of Prince Kropotkin's works. The portfolio was designed to make me look more writer-like, while Prince Kropotkin's book was intended to impress Mr. Remiantu by showing him that not only worker-writers, shabby like me, dealt with mutual aid, but even princes. If animals help one another and princes help one another, why shouldn't ordinary men, like workers, help one another too? I drafted my lecture on the same lines.

With the lower middle-class in mind, I decided to point out to them that the basis of the "Workers' Mutual Aid" was, as a matter of fact, laid by non-rational, unicellular beings when they became, through association, pluricellular. Should modern man be the only creature that fails to understand the importance of mutual help which has given rise to slavery, Christianity, feudalism, middle-class capitalism, the third International—all the results of that activity?

By putting things like this I hoped to convince them that there was no other way but mutual help. Thus, perhaps, I might be able to really come back home, safe and sound, by the first train, and might, one day, be a writer after all.

Therefore I confidently alighted on the platform of Timisoara railway-station. A thin woman, a dancing teacher and secretary to

the "Workers' Aid Association," had come to meet me. She was pale with excitement. She confessed that she'd trembled for fear I wouldn't come. All the town was in a state of excitement owing to my arrival. The *Evening Journal* had done its duty, and if I hadn't turned up the reputation of the organizers would have been lost for ever. Besides, the police had also been informed about the lecture and had not interfered as in the past. On hearing this I was very pleased. That proved the respect a writer enjoyed! If only I were able to keep my trench-coat on all the time! . . . It covered like a screen my trousers with their bulged knees and the ragged button-holes. The comrade who had been sent to meet me chatted cheerfully about their difficulties and especially about their hope and my influence which would, certainly, secure the required contribution. How many children of unemployed were not yet registered for milk! She suggested a guide to take me sightseeing. A dark curly-headed young man came up. What was there to show a writer of the people? The workers' dwellings located near the Racz-works with pools interspersed among them, the heap of garbage kept amazingly tidy by the town colony? Finally, we visited the monument erected on the spot where Gheorghe Doja had been seated on a fiery throne. We could not read the inscription on the ruined wooden monument because of the dark.

At eight o'clock I arrived at the premises of the "Workers' Aid Association." The place was crowded with workers and the intelligentsia of the town, such as physicians, lawyers, small manufacturers and even Iosil Meliusz, the writer, who had given up his priesthood. *Földi János* had sold like hot cakes. Some people had paid even up to 100 lei for a copy, priced 3 lei. Every body stared at me, Szilagyi Andras, the editor of *Ujpastor* (*New Shepherd*), had appeared from somewhere too. I was thinking with much respect of the lame printer. Taking courage, I started lecturing. The unicellular beings soon succeeded in uniting segregate people, making them feel ashamed of themselves.

I gently lifted some of them out of the sea dividing them into mammiferous and non-mammiferous creatures. After a few sentences about the law of the survival of the fittest I organized the tribal communities and next quickly surrounded private property which was then being formed with a ring-fence. Within a quarter of an hour I had made slave economy collapse as an obsolete form of mutual aid; Christian feudalism shone forth brightly while the

groaning of the serfs grew stronger and stronger. The feudal system quickly decayed, the middle-classes flourished and, at the same time, the French Revolution. The capitalist system of production had also begun to be quite out of date when, from the rear of the hall a sharp voice shouted suddenly through the open door:

"What lousy trick is this?"

As soon as this signal was given I saw the caps of the policemen appear and black snake-like whips whizzing on those who had not been able to get into the hall. It was the poor workers of the quarter that the police were belabouring with whips and fists. And in a jiffy everything was upside down. The people rushed to get out and jammed the side-doors. They tumbled down the wooden steps. At the gate a cordon of policemen barred their way. Meliusz grasped my arm and pulled me towards the door while I resisted; I couldn't possibly leave my trench-coat. I had to account for it, and it might have disappeared in the uproar. I shouldn't have bothered with such trifles, Meliusz said nervously. Yet I didn't leave my trench-coat nor did the policemen leave us. We sneaked to the gate where we found a car, the door of which was open. Meliusz pushed me into it to avoid being arrested.

Behind me, they were whipping the workers they had chased into the street. They wouldn't have taken so many blows but for my having written *Földi János*. Without that, the lecture wouldn't have taken place.

Could I get into that soft cushioned car? I drew back.

"No," said I, trembling slightly, "I can't run away. They are being beaten on my account. I shall stay with them . . ."

Jack R. Guss

V-DAY PLUS . . .

JIM HARPER, WHO WAS STUDYING FRENCH LITERATURE WITH an open mind, introduced him one night at supper at the *restaurant sans alcool*. "I want you to meet Jack Goughan," he said, "he's joining notre cercle de Yahoos. Make way for Persia."

They greeted him in that curt practical politeness of students, though he stood stiffly and awkwardly before them and was prepared to shake hands in the European custom. He looked ill at ease in his length and bent slenderness as if ashamed of his having to stand above them and conscious, perhaps suddenly, of the cold sore, a purplish asterisk, that disfigured his upper lip.

Jim introduced them ostentatiously, with a special note of distinction for each one. "Krum, Gerald J., from Colorado, home of Whizzer White; Sheila Radjowska, Prague, best interpreter in the Ecole; Morf Anenberg, Montreal, stinkweed de mal; Hans Pletscher, Schaffhausen, a legitimate Swiss; Philip Gold from Brussels and Brooklyn both; and Selma Pulford, London, if you're looking for an easy make. What we eating tonight, mes enfants, ragoût de cheval?"

They were eating boisterously and talking in French, which was the rule at the table by their own ukase except when something came up that loosened the English image like Andre Gide or Lenin's theory of divorce when they all violated the rule by tacit agreement and lapsed into English.

Sheila was telling about her experiences in Prague where she served as an official interpreter at a student conference.

"It was unbelievable, unbelievable," she repeated. "The spirit, the food, the knowledge of the delegates. Kids—eighteen, nineteen—the things they didn't know. Fantastic," she said. "I shall never forget it."

"You speak English, don't you, Jack?" said Harper solicitously.

"Not well," he answered. "I absorbed some of the English argot when I was working with the American Army in Germany. I'll have an occasion to astound you with my bad taste in time."

"When was that?" said Philip, turning to him with an interest not yet friendly nor hostile.

"It was after the war," he replied. "They had need of someone with a knowledge of German, and, I may add, a fairly professional knowledge of the Rhine wines among some things." He laughed pleasantly and began to toy with his fork.

"You speak German then," said Philip.

"It is almost my mother tongue. I spent most of my life there."

"You must have been on the receiving end of a lot of boom," Harper said. "Plenty of bombing, no?"

"Yes," he said, "the bombing was heavy. I lived too much

time in Berlin during the bombing. I saw it destroyed before my eyes."

Philip grew angry without much warning. He had raised the spoon to his lips but now he returned it slowly to his plate.

"What did you expect? What the hell did you expect? Rose petals?"

The Persian looked at him sadly, as if he had miscalculated the joke or the tone of voice of something decidedly American, something yet to be learned from the new or unlearned from that class of Americans he had met in uniform. He laughed nervously.

"No," he said, "no, of course. It was as it should be. The bombing was as it should be. Who is to dispute that? I pray you," he said, in his rather bookish English, "who is to contest the rightness of that before everything?" And once again he laughed, as if this were too self-evident, the laughter as self-evident and common to all as the soup.

"The only miscalculation," said Selma, wiping her mouth delicately with the quarter of a napking that the pension provided, "was dropping the bomb on Hiroshima instead of Berlin. If we are prone to accept the military apology that the ghastly thing was not ready on time. By gross blundering we've succeeded in dividing the divisible world into its oriental and occidental components. We shall pay the penalty for this in time. See if we don't."

"What do you mean?" Gerald asked.

"It's rather obvious," Selma explained. "Quite apart from our ethical megalomania our radical instincts made the decision quite clear. The eradication of 100,000 yellow animals is only a little gruesome, perhaps it even reduces the weight of the white man's burden. The eradication of 100,000 nazis, temporarily at odds with the most arguable political philosophy, would have been unthinkable." Selma ordered a compote from the waitress.

"You spoke of Prague," remarked the Persian pleasantly to Sheila. "I know it quite well."

"Do you," said Sheila.

"Yes," he said. "I had a devil of a time with the Czech bureaucracy getting my papers cleared, and in the end I was refused a visum."

"They're not very fond of Germans," said Sheila coolly.

"Yes, I can understand that clearly. I can even relate a joke to illustrate this well. I assume most of you understand German."

He waited for a reply, staring a little incredulously at each face and then appealing finally to Harper, who said:

"Go ahead, Jack. They all understand German. All these smart apples except me and Krum."

Uncertainly he began, "*In der Moldau . . .*" He interrupted himself to explain in English, "You know the famous river of that country."

"It is the Vltava River," said Sheila dispassionately. "It is a Czech river, and the Moldau is a poor translation because it is the German equivalent of what in Czech is known as Vltava."

"As you will," said the Persian good-humouredly. "*In der Vltava Kampf ein Mann gegen das Ertrinken un er schreit; 'Zur Hilfe! Zur Hilfe!' Über die Brücke beugt sich ein Czechischer Büurger un schriert hinunter; 'Hatst lieber schwimmen gelernt anstatt Deutsch!'*"

When he had finished he attempted to telegraph the point by laughing at once clearly and brusquely, but it did not help. "Perhaps no one understood," he said self-consciously.

"Beats me," said Jim, trying to relieve the embarrassed silence. "What's it about, Sheila?"

Woodenly as if she were translating a solemn statement in some UNO sub-commission, she repeated the joke in English. "A man was struggling in the Vltava and began to cry for help. On the bridge above a Czech citizen, hearing his cries, shouted down: 'You should have learned swimming rather than German'."

"A fine piece of character portraiture," said Gerald gallantly. "Did the man drown? I presume he was Kraut."

"Stupendous," remarked Sheila with sarcasm. "We shall begin by trying to fathom our disgust with pleasantries."

The Persian was not sure he understood everything. Having begun by doubting his fluency and comprehension in English he shifted his puzzlement. His wit was being mistaken for bereavement or so it appeared to them. This was a fantastic error. Could they question his amiableness, his friendly candour, his youth? He was perhaps eighteen to their twenty, twenty-two years. It was his first year at a university. With his dry tongue he touched the carbuncle on his upper lip, and bravely he began to explain himself, although they were again pre-occupied with their eating.

"I think it is because you do not believe me," he said with a slight tremor in his voice. "How can I blame you? I announce that I am a non-German in a German accent. I tell you of the

years I spent in Berlin. Perhaps it was my mistake to admit that the bombing was a good thing when it was not. How could I believe that when my own body was in peril. Does anyone say to Death: 'I approve of you'? But I am *not* German. I am Persian. I have papers to prove it," he concluded a little hysterically, and he began to fumble in his pockets for his Persian passport.

The waitress approached and said to him, "Will you take the menu, Monsieur?"

He did not hear because the language spoken so rapidly was foreign to his ear, and he was absorbed in producing his passport.

"You're not being given the Gestapo treatment," Philip said rudely. "There's no need for you to present your credentials. You're in a nice clean neutral country. You can buy all shades of political chastity at the newspaper kiosks. Even the Persian *Beobachter* if you like."

The waitress repeated vexatiously, "The menu or something else, please."

"Yes, yes," he said in his faltering French, "whatever you have." And though he began to take up the thread of his vindication, it was of no use, for once again they were busy eating and talking among themselves as if they had forgotten him. And he too began to concentrate on the soup, which was now cold.

How stupid of him, he thought, to plunge so without caution into their talk, to tell them of himself, even if it were only out of unawareness, perhaps only courtesy, that he did so. They were to be his student friends. One could say it was a promising beginning, for suspicion was a stronger tie than indifference. Remember young Bovary's first entrance into the classroom. The jeers and jaunts at country speech and homespun clothes. His accent was German and the field jacket he wore was a gift from a Portland, Oregon, sergeant. And their ridicule has only been transformed into mistrust. Soon there will be a community of interest as it had already sprung up between him and Jim Harper.

He gnawed at the fresh Swiss bread and listened to the murmur of their talk.

Again Philip Gold turned to him and asked, "You say your name's Jack?"

"Yes," he said a little uneasily.

"Well, how's that?" he said. "Jack's a strictly stateside monicker, as far as I can tell, ain't that right?"

The Persian who spoke German so well looked at Philip Gold whose uncle had died in Festung Europa of a weak heart simply staring at a German newsreel and muttering in Yiddish, "It cannot be *Shema Israel*." It would have been fantastic for a Persian youth of nineteen to realize the concatenation of legend, the repetition of the saga of terror from one generation to another. Jack Goughan looked at Philip Gold in his stiff white shirt, at the malevolent arching nostrils, at the eyes set in inquisitorial derision. He answered:

"A Persian name is difficult to pronounce for Americans. I was nicknamed Jack by an army captain. I am pleased to have this name."

"It's a pretty name," said Philip Gold. "It's as pretty as Fritz or Hans. It's as innocuous as Adolph."

"If it suits you better to call me Khosrov," the Persian said.

"I'll try to remember," Philip Gold replied, in a silence where everyone held his breath for an instant and listened.

And this was the way it went in his first encounter with his fellow students, but he came, nevertheless, habitually to the pension determined to understand their hostility and to break through their antagonism.

After a week he invited them to come to his room and share a small jar of caviar his father had sent him from Czechoslovakia. He had invited them all: cautiously, yet trying to carry it off with an air of indifferent friendliness, fearing, as he had reason to, that they would consider this overture as a kind of appeasement.

"I wish you to come if you have time," he had said, but only Harper had shown up, and then he was afraid.

The day of the repast the room was warm from the intense radiator heat, for it was cold outside. On the marbled-top dresser was a heaping plateful of tit-bits of bread mounded generously with the black caviar ova. Beside it was a decanter of kirsch. They greeted each other effusively.

"I am so happy you came," he said to Jim Harper. "I hope you like caviar, and I hope the caviar will give you an impulse to drink, and the kirsch will give you an appetite for more of the caviar. Come sit."

"So that's the stuff," said Jim, "those little black eggs, huh?"

"But first a shot of kirsch, Jim, boy."

"I believe I have time for a shot of kirsch," said Jim.

"Time, time," the Persian joked graciously. "We have time to kill the kirsch, to kill the caviar, and to kill maybe the French language together."

"Really, Jack, I ain't got time for but more than a quick one. Down the hatch and I've got to scram back for that 'Existence et Valeur' lecture."

The Persian looked crestfallen. He studied the plateful of caviar sandwiches he had prepared so sedulously. Slowly and pensively he filled two glasses with the kirsch and said, "At least we shall have the friendship drink. We shall consecrate our friendship formally. If you spoke German we would have the right to say to one another from now to forever: Du."

They wound their arms together and drank, emptying the little beakers in one gulp.

Because Jim Harper was kind and affected by this ceremony of established intimacy, he asked, "What the hell's wrong, Jack? What is it that's queer between you and them?" He bit into one of the sandwiches. "Now tell me what the hell's eating everybody? You throw a nice little soirée like this here with fish eggs and a bottle of fine hootch to go along and nobody shows up. Now what sort of old-world gallantry is that?"

"I too am bewildered," said Jack Goughan. "Maybe they are busy," he added, hoping that Jim Harper would see how untrue this must be and deny it.

"It beats me," said Jim. "It really does. I can't make it out anyhow. Tell me the truth, Jack, they got something on you? Something I can't compri in all these different lingos?"

The Persian narrowed his eyes. Again the speech was too fast, the mercurial tone a mixture of mockery and indifference, the words both fleet and frivolous, the tongue as lightning swift as a serpent's. He had no time to respond, for the words poured on:

"I'm not admitting what they think is true, but who the hell do they think they are making insinuations while they were sitting the war out in the German protectorates. They got a right to beat their gums, they have."

He was in his coat now preparing to leave. "I'll tell them what they missed," he said. "Caviar and kirsch." He went over to the table and helped himself to another sandwich. "I think I'm beginning to develop a taste for this stuff. Sturgeon roe, the manna of czars and commiczars."

"Another drink?" said the Persian in the dull inflexion of polite reflex.

"I've got to breeze," Jim said. "See you at the Pension," and he left, leaving the door ajar and the draught from the hall to scatter the order of papers resting atop the desk.

One evening when the *bise* had begun to blow starkly, Jack Goughan came in out of the frosty night to be greeted by the waitress who had at that moment of leisure time to say cheerfully, "*Bonsoir Monsieur.*"

Pleasantly surprised, he replied in his blundering French, "This is the first time a waitress has talked to me like that." He had meant simply that he was unaccustomed to this salutation from the busy waitress.

It was Philip Gold who turned on him savagely, "Who the hell do you think you are talking to her like that, you goddam nazi!"

Because he was astounded and could not understand the reason for Philip's fury he slipped unknowingly into German and repeated imbecilely, "I said nothing, I said nothing."

"Get out of here, you filthy Kraut!" Philip screamed.

Khosrov Goughan was so dismayed that he could think of nothing more to say as he regarded Philip Gold but, "*Jude, Jude, Jude.*"

NOTES

SYDNEY GOODSIR SMITH, one of the leading young Scots poets, has a lyric style of particular vigour which makes him the right person to examine the censored aspects of Burns. In *Carotid Cornucopius* (1947) he writes what is inevitably called a work of Joycean Scots though it has its roots in the bursting energy of the Scots folk tradition. His later book of verse is *Under the Eildon Tree*.

The importance of the letter by E.T. for the understanding of D. H. Lawrence needs no comment: it was written by her to the author of *Lawrence and Apocalypse*

JACK BEECHING is a young English poet.

Though *Arena* does not normally print essays on the Arts we have included Aragon's essay on Matisse because of the general significance of his theme that Happiness is now in itself a revolutionary theme. In our last issue we drew attention to the attack on Aragon as an intellectual leader of the Peace Movement, by which he has been deprived of his Civil Rights in France.

DAL STIVENS is a young Australian writer, who has successfully carried on the method of the Australian "folktale"—the tale told round a campfire or in a pub. He has a book of short stories published in England, *The Tramp*.

DAN DAVIN is a young New Zealand writer, who has attracted much attention since the publication of his novel *For the Rest of Our Lives*, the most authentic picture yet given of war in the desert.

JACK LINDSAY has recently published a full-length biography of Charles Dickens.

NAGY ISTVAN is a Hungarian who works in Rumania, where there is a special publishing house for folk of the Transylvanian area who speak Hungarian. What is printed here is the first section of a long story dealing with the way in which the writer willynilly finds himself implicated in the social effects of his work.

JACK R. GUSS is a young American writer for whose story we are indebted to the enterprising bilingual magazine published in Paris, *Points*.

With this issue ARENA completes its first year. It has done what it set out to do—to give English readers some idea of the thriving literature to be found in the countries where a new life is stirring; it has brought out some of the main developments in French literature most valuable for us in Britain; and it has begun the work of revaluation of our own intellectual world.

The new ARENA that will start from No. 5 will concentrate more on the last-named aspect. It will seek to raise the fundamental issues that must be clarified if our culture is to revive; and it will print the best creative work done here.

It will be henceforth a *Bi-monthly* issued at the price of 1s. 6d. a copy—yearly subscription 10s. post free.

Nancy Cunard asks us to state that the translations of the Spanish poems in her article in No. 3 (other than the two by Rolfe Humphries and A. L. Lloyd) are not, as was printed, all by her. She is consequently not responsible for most of the versions.

Also in Aub's poem, the first six lines on p. 19 have been misplaced, and should be read between lines 6 and 7 printed on p. 18.

Manuel Machado on 28 should read Antonio Machado. Constanca de la Mora has been killed in a motor-accident in Guatemala since the essay was written.



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